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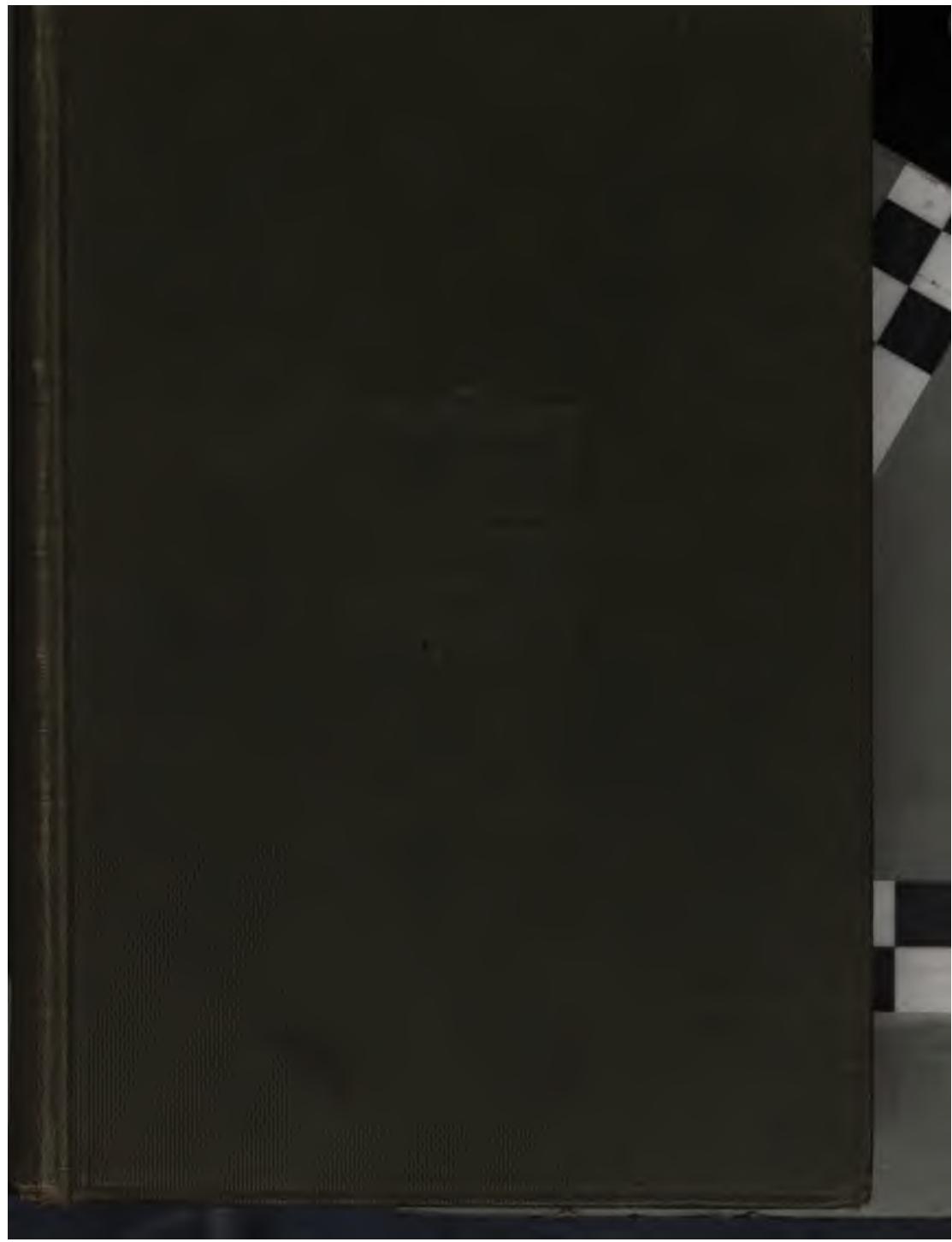
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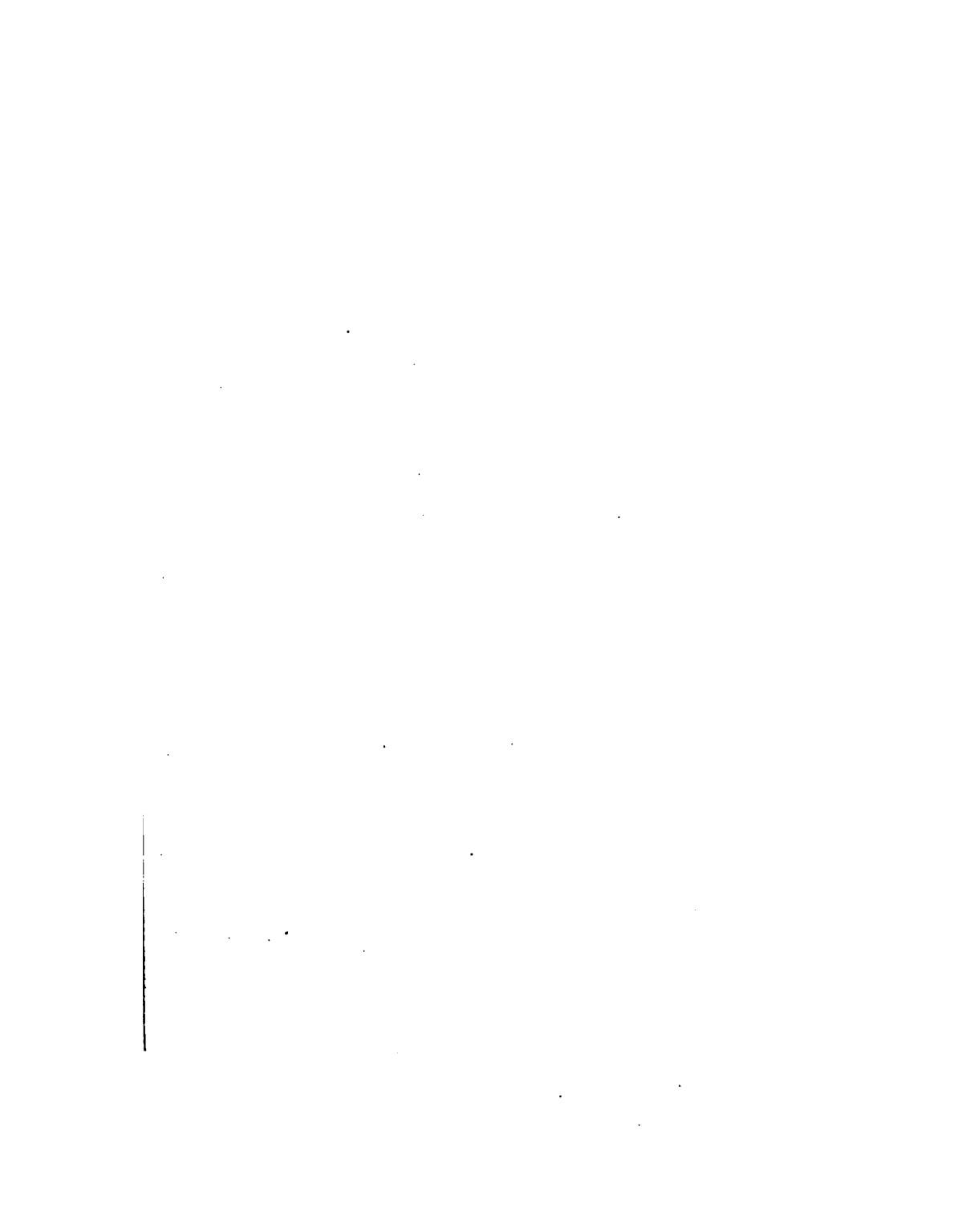




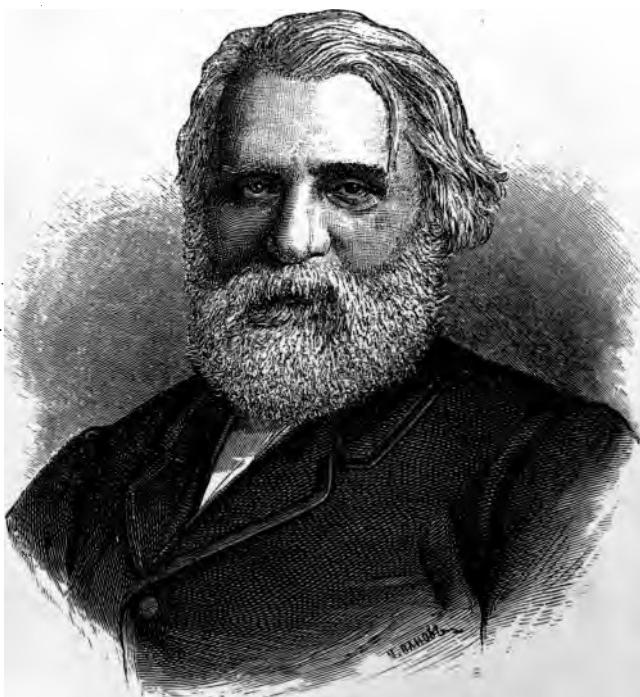


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IVAN TURGÉNIEFF.

SPRING FLOODS
BY IVAN TURGÉ-
NIEFF



NEW YORK
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PUBLISHERS

TBH



Turgenev, I.S.
" "

SPRING FLOODS

TRANSLATED BY
MRS. SOPHIE MICHELL BUTTS

A LEAR OF THE STEPPE

TRANSLATED BY
WILLIAM HAND BROWNE

BY
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NEW YORK
THOMAS Y. CROWELL & CO.
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By HENRY HOLT

SPRING FLOODS.

. . . IT was two o'clock in the morning when he returned to his rooms. He sent away the servant who was lighting the candles, and throwing himself into an arm-chair by the fire, buried his face in his hands.

Never yet had he experienced such utter weariness, morally or physically. He had spent the whole of that evening in the society of agreeable and educated people ; some of the women were pretty, almost all the men were distinguished for their intellect and talents ; he, himself, had spoken well, if not brilliantly ; yet never had that “*tedium vitae*,” already experienced by the Romans—that aversion from life—taken such strong hold of him before. Had he been some years younger, he would have wept tears of anguish, lonesomeness, and irritability, for his heart was full of bitterness. A heavy gloom encircled him like a dark autumnal night, and he could find no way out of this darkness and bitterness. The only remedy for such a gloomy state of mind was sleep, but that solace he felt was denied him.

He pondered slowly and bitterly over the useless turmoil of life, over the meanness and falseness of human nature. The different periods of life passed gradually before his mental vision, (he had only reached his fifty-second year,) and each received no mercy at his hands. In every period he perceived the same emptiness and frivolity, the same half-concealed, half-acknowledged love of flattery—which, instead even of soothing a child, would sooner cause it to cry—and then, as sudden as a snow-storm, he beheld old age approach, and with it the ever-increasing great

dread of death . . . next death itself hurrying old age into the dark abyss! Well is it, if every life is played out like this! But often, sickness and great sufferings sear our life long before our earthly journey is accomplished. Poets are wont to compare life to a troubled sea. In his fancy, the great sea of life lay stretched before him, so smooth, so stagnant and transparent, and gazing down from his imaginary small, unsteady boat, he could discern shapeless monsters lying far below in the darkness: all life's trials, sicknesses, sorrows, madnesses, its poverty and its blindness. . . . Looking again, he could see one of these monstrous objects dividing itself from the darkness, and, rising higher and higher, it becomes fearfully distinct. Yet another minute, and danger menaces the boat! It is past: the monster sinks gradually lower, and falls at last to the ground, where it lies moving feebly. But alas! the fatal day must surely come when that small, unsteady boat shall be upset.

He raised his head, rose suddenly from his chair, walked twice up and down the room, seated himself at his writing-table, and opening one drawer after another, began hunting amongst his papers, which consisted chiefly of letters. He did not know why he did it—he was not searching for any thing—he was simply striving to escape from the thoughts which oppressed him. Unfolding several letters, (in one he found a withered flower fastened with a bit of faded ribbon,) he only shrugged his shoulders, and turning to the fire, put them aside, probably with the intention of destroying them. Hurriedly introducing his hand into each drawer, he suddenly opened his eyes wide with astonishment, and slowly drew out a small octagonal box of an old-fashioned shape, and as slowly lifted the lid. In the box, beneath a double layer of discolored paper, lay a garnet cross.

For several moments he gazed perplexedly at the cross, and a low cry escaped his lips. . . . Pity and joy were both expressed in his face. He felt like one who had suddenly met an old friend whom he had long lost sight of, whom he had fondly loved, and who now appeared before

him, unexpectedly, after the lapse of years, and yet unchanged by time.

He rose, and returning to the fire, seated himself again in his chair, and once more buried his face in his hands, murmuring, "Of all days, why to-day!" And many things that had happened to him in life came back to his memory.

This is what he remembered. . . . But we must first tell our readers his name. It was Dimitri Petrovitch Sanin.

And these were his recollections:

I.

It was in the summer of 1840. Sanin had only just entered his twenty-second year, and was passing through Frankfort *en route* to Russia from Italy. He was a young man of small means, entirely his own master, and with but few relations. On the death of a distant relative, he found himself the possessor of several thousand rubles, and he at once determined to spend this money abroad, before he entered the government service, which, he thought, was the only career left to him in his penniless condition. Sanin carried out his intentions faithfully, and managed so dexterously that the day he arrived at Frankfort, he found he had just sufficient money to take him back to St. Petersburg. In the year 1840 there were very few railways, and tourists traveled about in diligences. Sanin had taken a seat in a diligence, but it was not to leave Frankfort until eleven o'clock at night. He had therefore several hours at his disposal until that time. Fortunately, the weather was lovely, and Sanin having dined at the celebrated hotel, the "White Swan," sauntered out to explore the town. He saw Danneker's "Ariadne," which pleased him but little; he visited the house where had lived Goethe, of whose works he had only read *Werther*, in a French translation; he walked along the banks of the Main, and grew sorrowful, as every real traveler should do, and at last, at six in the evening, he found himself tired and dusty in one of the principal streets of Frankfort. Or

one of its numerous houses, the signboard of an Italian confectioner, "Giovanni Roselli," attracted his notice. He entered the shop to get himself a glass of lemonade; but in the first room, where, behind a neat little counter, were arranged on painted shelves glass jars with rusks, chocolate cakes, and sugar drops, he saw no one; a cat alone purred in a high wicker chair by the window, and on the floor, with a slanting ray of the evening sun full on it, lay a large ball of bright red wool, and close by a small basket overturned. Confused sounds were heard in the next room. Sanin waited awhile and then, as no one answered the bell, he called out in a loud voice, "Is no one here?" At the same moment the door from the next room was violently thrown open, and Sanin stood struck with astonishment.

II.

A girl of nineteen, with a mass of black curls flowing over her uncovered shoulders, had suddenly burst into the shop with outstretched arms, and seeing Sanin, rushed up to him, seized his hand, and tried to lead him back with her, saying at the same time, in a stifled voice, "Quick, quick, here, save him!" It was not from an unwillingness to obey her, but from sheer amazement, that Sanin, instead of immediately following her, stood rooted to the ground. He had never seen such beauty before. She turned to him with such despair in her voice, in her look, in the movement of her clinched hand which she held to her pale cheek, and said so earnestly, "Come, oh! come!" that he sprang to the opened door.

In the room they had entered, stretched on an old-fashioned horse-hair sofa, lay a boy of about fourteen, apparently her brother, with a face as white as marble. His eyes were closed, and his dark thick hair threw a shadow over his pale forehead and finely-penciled eyebrows, and his parted blue lips showed his teeth firmly clinched. He seemed not to breathe; one hand had fallen over the sofa, while the other was thrown behind his head. The boy was lying dressed, with his neck-tie knotted round his neck.

The young girl threw herself down beside the boy. "He is dead, he is dead!" she cried passionately; "a minute ago he was sitting here—speaking to me—and suddenly he fell down and has not moved since. . . . O God! can no help be had? And my mother away! Pantaleone, Pantaleone, where is the doctor?" she added in Italian, "have you been to fetch him?"

"No, Signora, I have sent Louisa," answered a gruff voice from behind the door; and then a little old man came shuffling into the room, dressed in a plum-colored dress-coat with black buttons, a high white choker, short nankeen trowsers, and dark blue stockings. His small face was hardly visible from the quantity of iron-gray hair that fell over it. His hair stood high on the top of his head and hung in straggling locks, giving him very much the appearance of a ruffed hen, more especially so, as the only features to be distinguished from beneath this mass of iron-gray were his sharp nose and round yellow eyes.

"Louisa can run, and I can not," continued the old man in Italian, looking down at his large gouty feet clad in high shoes with bows; "but here, I have brought some water."

He held the neck of a bottle, grasped in his shriveled, bony fingers.

"But Emile may die in the mean while!" exclaimed the young girl, turning to Sanin for assistance. "O sir! can you not help him in any way?"

"He must be bled—he has a fit," interposed old Pantaleone.

Although Sanin had no knowledge whatever of medicine, one thing he did know—that boys of fourteen were not subject to fits.

"He has only fainted, it is no fit," he said, addressing Pantaleone. "Have you any brushes?" The old man raised his face in astonishment, and said abruptly, "What?"

"Brushes, brushes," repeated Sanin in German and French. "Clothes-brushes," he added, brushing his own coat with his hand.

The old man understood him at last.

"Brushes! spazzette! of course we have brushes!"

"Give them here then; we must take off his coat and rub him."

"*Benone!* But will you not put any water on his head?"

"No, . . . we shall do that afterward; go and fetch the brushes."

Pantaleone placed the bottle on the floor, ran out of the room, and returned with a couple of brushes, one a hair-brush, the other a clothes-brush. A curly poodle followed him, wagging his tail furiously and looking up inquiringly at the old man, the young girl, and even at Sanin, as though anxious to know what all the excitement was about.

Sanin took the coat off the boy very gently, turned his own shirt-sleeves up, and, taking the clothes-brush, commenced rubbing his chest and hands with all his strength. Pantaleone used the same energy with the hair-brush, along the boy's trowsers and boots, while the young girl knelt by the side of the sofa, holding her brother's head in both her hands, and never taking her eyes off his face, into which she gazed anxiously and lovingly. Sanin, while thus occupied, watched the young girl furtively. "Heavens! what a lovely creature!" he inwardly ejaculated.

III.

Her nose was not small, but handsomely shaped, and her upper lip was covered with a *soufflon* of down, while her complexion was of a clear olive; her wavy hair, like that of Allori's Judith in the Palazzo Pitti, and more especially her eyes, deep gray with a dark rim beneath the lashes—such beautiful eyes, though at the moment overclouded by fear and grief, still radiantly triumphant eyes—carried him back in imagination to that glorious country from whence he was now returning. . . . Even in Italy he had never seen eyes to rival those he now gazed at. The young girl breathed slowly and irregularly, and between each breath she drew, she seemed to listen and wait for a breath to escape her brother's lips.

Sanin still kept rubbing the boy, and occasionally watching the old man, whose original appearance attracted his

attention. Old Pantaleone had exhausted his strength and was breathing with great difficulty; each time he lifted the brush he gave a little jump and groan, and his locks of hair, saturated with perspiration, fell to and fro about his face, like the root of some big tree washed by the water.

"Draw off his boots," Sanin was about to say to him, when the dog, unable to comprehend the nature of the disturbance, gave vent to his feelings in a loud bark.

"*Tartaglia, canaglia!*" growled the old man in a low voice. At that instant a change came over the young girl's face. She raised her dark eyebrows, and her large eyes sparkled with happiness. Sanin turned to the boy—a color had come to his face, his nostrils were moving, and a sigh escaped through his still firmly closed teeth. . . .

"Emile," she cried, "*Emilio mio!*"

A pair of large black eyes opened very gradually. There was still a vacant look in them, but nevertheless they smiled, though faintly, and the smile reached his pale lips. He moved the hand that hung over the sofa and placed it on his breast.

"*Emilio!*" repeated the young girl, raising herself from the floor; and such a forcible and vivid expression flashed across her face, that she seemed on the point of either bursting into tears or into a fit of laughter.

"Emile! What is it? Emile!" exclaimed a voice from the other room, and a lady, very neatly dressed, with silver-gray hair and dark complexion, entered the room very quietly. An elderly man was following in her footsteps, while the head of a maid-servant peered from behind his shoulders.

The young girl rushed to meet them.

"He is saved, mother, he is alive!" she exclaimed convulsively, embracing the lady who had come into the room.

"But what has happened?" she asked. "I return home and meet the doctor and Louisa . . ."

The young girl began to relate all that had occurred, while the doctor approached the sick boy, who was regaining consciousness every minute, and was still smiling: he appeared to begin to feel sensible of the trouble he had caused

"I see you have been rubbing him with brushes," said the doctor, addressing himself to Sanin and Pantaleone. "It was a very bright idea of yours, . . . and now we shall see what else can be done. . . ."

He felt the boy's pulse. "Hem! now show me your tongue!"

The old lady bent over the boy anxiously. He smiled more brightly than before, and raised his eyes to her face and blushed.

It struck Sanin that his presence was now no more required, so he passed back into the shop; but his hand had hardly turned the handle of the street-door, when the young girl again appeared before him and stopped him.

"You are going away," she began, looking kindly into his face; "I do not wish to detain you now, but you must promise to come to us this evening; we are so much indebted to you—you have been the means, perhaps, of saving my brother's life—we wish to thank you, and so does my mother; you must tell us who you are, and you must rejoice with us in his recovery."

"But I leave for Berlin to-day," stammered Sanin.

"But you will still have time," continued the young girl hurriedly. "Come to us in an hour, to take a cup of chocolate. You promise? I must return to my brother now. You will come?"

What could Sanin do?

"Yes, I shall come," he answered.

The young girl pressed his hand warmly, fled from him—and in another minute Sanin stood outside the door.

IV.

When he returned to Roselli's, after the lapse of an hour and a half, he was welcomed as one of the family. Emilio was sitting on the same sofa on which he had been rubbed; the doctor had prescribed some medicine, and had advised the patient to be kept very quiet, as he was of a very nervous temperament and had a tendency to heart-disease. He had always been subject to fainting fits, but never to

such a violent one as this had been. The doctor, however, had declared him to be out of danger.

Emile was dressed, as became an invalid, in an ample dressing-gown; his mother had wound a blue scarf round his neck, and he looked as gay and lively as though he were at a feast. And every thing indeed in the room had a festive appearance. In front of the sofa, on a round table, covered with a clean cloth and surrounded by cups, decanters with sirup, biscuits and buns, and even flowers, stood a high china coffee-pot; six wax candles burned in two old-fashioned silver candelabras. On one side of the sofa stood a soft, enticing, Voltaire arm-chair, and this comfortable seat was at once presented to Sanin. All the inmates of the pastry-cook shop, whose acquaintance he had made that day, were present, not even excluding the poodle Tartaglia and the cat: all seemed unspeakably happy; the dog sneezed with pleasure, and the cat kept purring and clawing the chair as it had done before. Sanin was called upon to explain who he was, from whence he came, and what his name was. When he announced that he was a Russian, both the ladies looked surprised, and even gave a cry of astonishment, and exclaimed in one voice, that his pronunciation of German was excellent, but that if he preferred speaking in French he might do so, as they also understood that language and spoke it. Sanin at once took advantage of the proposal. "Sanin! Sanin!" The ladies had no idea that a Russian name could be so easy to pronounce. His Christian name, "Dimitri," sounded very pleasantly to them. The elder of the two ladies informed him that in her youth she had heard a beautiful opera called "Demetrio e Polibio"—but she thought "Dimitri" was much prettier than "Demetrio." This kind of conversation continued for about an hour. Then the ladies enlightened Sanin on all the details of their own life. The mother, the lady with the silver-gray hair, was the most talkative of all. She told Sanin her name was Lenore Roselli; that she was the widow of Giovanni Battista Roselli, who twenty-five years ago had settled in Frankfort as a confectioner; that Giovanni Battista

was a native of Vicenza, and was a very good man, although rather passionate and presumptuous, and moreover a Republican! With these words, Madam Roselli pointed to the departed Giovanni's portrait, which hung in oil colors over the sofa. It was evident that the artist—"also a Republican!" as the old lady remarked with a sigh—had not been successful in catching the likeness, as in his portrait the late Giovanni Battista had all the features of a fierce-looking brigand—not unlike Rinaldo Rinaldini! She, herself, was a native of that "ancient and beautiful town of Padua, celebrated for its wonderful cupola, painted by the immortal Correggio!" But from her long sojourn in Germany she had become almost entirely Germanized. Then she added, shaking her head mournfully, all that was left to her now, was this daughter and this son, (pointing to each by turns with her finger;) that her daughter was called Gemma, and her son Emilio; that they were both very good and obedient children, especially Emilio, . . . ("Am I not also obedient?" asked her daughter.—"Oh! thou art likewise a Republican!" answered her mother;) that of course her business was not as profitable as it had been during the life of her husband, who had understood his trade thoroughly, . . . ("Un grand uomo!" put in Pantaleone with energy;) still, thank God, they had sufficient to live on!

V.

Gemma listened to her mother—now laughing, now sighing, now patting her shoulder, now lifting her finger at her in reproof, now looking at Sanin; at last she rose, put her arms round her mother's neck, and kissed her. Pantaleone was also presented to Sanin. It appeared that at one time he had been an opera-singer, but had long since thrown up his theatrical profession, and was now filling the post of friend and servant in the Roselli family. Notwithstanding his long stay in Germany, he had learnt but very little of the language, and could only scold in it, and even on these occasions he twisted the abusive words most unmercifully. "Ferroflucto spicebubio!" was the

term he applied to almost every German. But his pronunciation of Italian was perfect—he having been born in Sinigaglia, where you hear the “*lingua toscana in bocca romana!*” Emilio was apparently luxuriating on the sofa and abandoning himself to the pleasant sensations of one escaped from danger or recovering from an illness; besides, it was not difficult to perceive that all the household petted him. He thanked Sanin in a very shy way, and seemed more especially to be absorbed in the consumption of syrup and sweetmeats. Sanin was forced to drink two large cups of excellent chocolate, and to eat a considerable number of biscuits; he had barely time to swallow one, when Gemma would offer him another—and to refuse her was an utter impossibility! He soon felt himself at home, and the time flew with incredible quickness. He had to relate a great deal to them—about Russia in particular, about the Russian climate, Russian society, the Russian peasant, and more especially about the Cossacks; also about the war of 1812, about Peter the Great, about the Kremlin, the Russian songs, and bells in Russia. Both the ladies had a very faint notion of our vast and distant country. Madam Roselli, or, as she was more frequently called, Frau Lenore, threw Sanin into great consternation by asking him whether that celebrated house of ice still existed which was erected in St. Petersburg during the last century, and concerning which she had read, not long since, such an interesting article in one of her husband’s books: *Bellezze delle arti.* In answer to his exclamation: “Do you really suppose we never have summer in Russia?” Frau Lenore replied, that she had hitherto imagined Russia thus: eternal snow, every one walking about in fur cloaks, and all military men—but that hospitality in Russia was extreme, and that all the peasants were very obedient! Sanin strove to impart to her and to her daughter more accurate information about Russia. When the conversation turned to Russian music, he was immediately begged to sing some Russian air, and they pointed to a small piano with black keys where they should have been white, and *vice versa.* He obeyed without any preamble, and accom-

panying himself with a couple of fingers of his right hand and with three of his left, (his forefinger, middle one, and thumb,) he sang in a small nasal tenor voice, first of all, "*Sarafan*," then "*Po ulitsie mostovoi*," ("Along the village road.") The ladies praised his voice and the music, but were most of all enchanted with the sweetness and sonorousness of the Russian language, and begged he would translate the texts of the songs. Sanin did as he was asked; but as the words "*Sarafan*," and especially "*Po ulitsie mostovoi*," ("On a paved street a young girl went for water"—it was thus he translated the original,) could not inspire his audience with a very grand conception of Russian poetry, he first of all recited, then sang, Pushkin's "*Ya pomniu tchudnoe mgnovanie*," ("I remember a moment of bliss,") set to music by Glinka, the minor parts of which he sang rather falsely. The ladies were in ecstasies. Frau Lenore even discovered in the Russian language a wonderful resemblance to Italian. "*Mgnovanie*" (moment) sounded like "*o vieni*," "*so mnoi*" (with me) like "*siam noi*," etc., etc. Even the names of Pushkin (she pronounced it Pussein) and Glinka reminded her of her own country. Sanin, in his turn, prayed they would sing him something, and they also stood on no ceremony. Frau Lenore seated herself at the piano, and together with Gemma sang a few short duets and "*Stornello*." The mother must have had in her youth a good contralto voice; the daughter's was rather weak, but nevertheless very agreeable.

VI.

But it was not Gemma's voice, but her own self that he admired. He sat somewhat far back and thought to himself that no palm-tree even in the poetry of Benedictoff, who was then the poet in vogue, could rival the elegant symmetry of her form. When, in the pathetic parts, she raised her eyes, it seemed to him the heavens must surely open at such a glance. Even old Pantaleone, who, leaning his shoulder against the door and burying his chin and mouth in his ample neck-cloth, listened gravely, with the air of a connoisseur—even he was rapt in admiration and

wonder at the beautiful face before him—and yet one would have supposed that he had long since grown used to its loveliness! Having finished singing the duets, Frau Lenore informed Sanin that Emilio had likewise an excellent voice—as clear as silver; but he had just entered that age when the voice changes, (and most certainly he did speak in a sort of cracked base,) and for that very reason it was forbidden him to sing. Pantaleone, however, continued the old lady, might, in honor of the visitor, strike up some song of the olden days! Pantaleone instantly assumed an air of displeasure, frowned, tossed up his hair, and announced to the company that he had long since given up that sort of thing, although, undoubtedly, in his youth he had been able to hold his own, and, moreover, had belonged to that grand epoch when the real classic singers—singers whose very names were not to be coupled with the present screechers—and the real school for singing had existed; that he, Pantaleone Cippatola, native of Varese, had been presented at Modena with a laurel wreath, and that even on that occasion several white pigeons had been let loose in the theatre. Besides, a Russian, a Prince Tarbusski—“*il principe Tarbusski*”—with whom he was on the most friendly footing, had constantly, during supper, invited him out to Russia, promised him mountains of gold, mountains! . . . but he had felt loth to leave Italy, the land of Dante—*il paese del Dante*! Then came numberless troubles, he himself had been to blame. . . . Here the old man stopped abruptly, sighed heavily, cast his eyes down, and began to talk again of the time of the classical singers, of the celebrated tenor Garcia, for whom he cherished such unbounded respect. “That was a man indeed!” he cried. “Never did the great Garcia—*il gran Garcia*—lower himself to that extent as to sing in a falsetto voice, as do the present petty tenors of the day. His voice came rolling from his chest, always from his chest, *voce di petto si!*” and here the old man struck his chest with his shriveled little fist! “And what an actor! A volcano, *signori miei*, a volcano, *un Vesuvio!* I had the honor and the happiness of singing with him in an opera

dell' illustrissimo maestro Rossini—in Otello! Garcia was Otello—I was Iago—and when he uttered those words . . .

Here Pantaleone drew himself up into position, and sang in a trembling, hoarse, but still pathetic voice :

“ *L'i . . . ra daver . . . so daver . . . so il fato
Io piu no . . . no . . . no . . . non temerò!* ”

“ The whole theatre trembled, *signori miei*, but I kept up with him, and I sang :

“ *L'i . . . ra daver . . . so daver . . . so il fato
Temer piu non dovio!* ”

Then he, like lightning, like a tiger, sang out—

“ *Morro! . . . ma vendicato . . .* ”

Again, when he sang . . . when he sang that famous air out of *Matrimonio segreto* : *Pria che spuntî . . .* when after the words : *I cavalli di galoppo*—he came to the following line : *Senza posa caccierà*—here *il gran Garcia* performed wonders—it was astounding, *com' è stupendo!* Only listen, this is what he did

The old man attempted an extraordinary kind of fioritura, and broke down on the tenth note, and giving an impatient wave of the hand, turned away, muttering, “ Why do you torment me? ” Gemma instantly sprang from her chair, and applauding loudly with both hands and crying, Bravo! bravo! ran up to the poor old pensioned Iago and patted him kindly on the shoulders. Emile alone laughed pitilessly. *Cet age est sans pitié*—this age knows no pity, was said long ago by La Fontaine.

Sanin strove to console the aged bard, and opened out a fresh conversation with him in Italian—(he had picked up a little of the language during his last journey.) He spoke of the *paese del Dante, dove il si suona*. This phrase and another—*Lasciate ogni speranza*—formed the whole extent of this young tourist's Italian poetical knowledge; but Pantaleone entirely ignored his deficiencies. Burying his chin still deeper into his neck-cloth, and staring fiercely out of his small bright eyes, he more than ever resembled a bird, an angry one too—a crow or a vulture. Then

Emile, blushing suddenly, as spoilt children are wont to do, turned to his sister and said that, if she wished her visitor to be amused, the best thing she could do would be to read one of Maltz's small comedies, which she read so well. Gemma laughed, tapped her brother gently on the hand, and exclaimed that he was always inventing something of the kind! Nevertheless, she went straight to her room, and, returning with a small book in her hand, placed herself at the table before the lamp, looked around her, lifted up her finger as though to say, "Now silence!"—a purely Italian gesture—and began reading.

VII.

Maltz was a Frankfort author of thirty years' standing, who in his short and lightly sketched comedies, written in the local dialect, brought forth, in an amusing and bold, though not profoundly humorous manner, the different types of Frankfort. Gemma's reading proved to be really very good—quite artistic. Her face reflected each character to perfection, and she gave full scope to all her powers of mimicry, which she had inherited with her Italian blood: showing no mercy either for her delicate voice or her lovely face, she made the most laughable grimaces, screwed up her eyes, puckered up her nose, lisped, squeaked when she had to impersonate a decrepit, mad old woman, or a silly burgomaster. She, herself, never laughed while reading; but when her audience (excepting, it is true, Pantaleone, who withdrew indignantly as soon as the discourse turned to *quel ferrofusto Tedesco*) interrupted her by outbursts of loud laughter, she, dropping the book on her knees, would join them in their merriment, laughing in silvery tones, with her head thrown back, and her black curls dancing in soft ringlets down her neck and shoulders. When the laughter ceased, she instantly lifted her book, her features assumed their proper character, and she would continue reading gravely.

Sanin could not admire her sufficiently; what puzzled him most of all was the magic power by which so lovely and ideal a face was so suddenly transformed into such

comical and, at times, almost trivial expressions. She was not as successful in reading the parts of young ladies or "jeunes premières;" she failed, especially, in the love scenes; she felt aware of that herself, and, for that very reason, read them with a tinge of satire—as though she put no faith in all those enthusiastic vows and exalted words, which even the author himself avoided as far as it was possible.

Sanin had not noticed how the time flew, and only recollects his impending journey when the clock struck ten. He jumped from his chair like one who had been stung.

"What is the matter with you?" asked Frau Lenore.

"I must leave for Berlin to-day, and have already taken my place in the diligence."

"And when does it start?"

"At half-past ten!"

"Well, then, you are too late," observed Gemma; "so stay, and I shall go on reading."

"Have you paid all the money, or only a part of it?" inquired Frau Lenore.

"All!" said Sanin with a sorrowful face. Gemma looked at him through half-closed eyes and burst out laughing, while her mother said reprovingly, "The young gentleman has spent his money all for nothing, and you find this a cause for merriment!"

"What does it matter?" answered Gemma; "it will not ruin him, and we shall do our best to console him. Will you have some lemonade?"

Sanin took a glass of lemonade, Gemma resumed her reading, and all went on as before.

The clock struck twelve. He rose to say good-night.

"You are bound to stay now for some days at Frankfort," Gemma said to him. "Why should you hurry? You will not find it more agreeable in any other town." Here she stopped. "Really, you will not," she added smiling.

Sanin gave no reply, but thought that the lightness of his purse would necessitate him to remain at Frankfort until

he should get an answer from his friend at Berlin, to whom he intended applying for money.

"Stay, do stay," put in Frau Lenore. "We shall introduce you to Gemma's future husband, Herr Karl Klüber. He was prevented from coming to-day, being very busy in the shop—of course you noticed the largest cloth and mercer's shop here in the town. Well, he is head man there. But he will be delighted to make your acquaintance."

This piece of news—Heaven knows why—had a most irritating effect on Sanin. "Happy man!" was the thought that flashed through his mind. He looked at Gemma—and he seemed to notice a satirical expression in her eyes. He wished them good-night once more.

"Until to-morrow? Is it really to be until to-morrow?" asked Frau Lenore.

"Until to-morrow!" said Gemma, not in an inquiring but in an affirmative voice, as though it could not be otherwise.

"Until to-morrow!" replied Sanin. Emile, Pantaleone, and the poodle Tartaglia escorted him to the corner of the street. Pantaleone could not restrain himself from expressing his extreme displeasure at Gemma's reading.

"I wonder she is not ashamed of herself! Grimacing and squeaking—*un caricatura!* She should impersonate Merope or Clytaemnestra—something grand and tragic; while, here, she mimics some detestable German woman. I can do that. . . . *Mertz, kertz, smertz,*" he added in a gruff voice, drawing out his face and spreading out his fingers. Tartaglia barked at him, and Emile went off into fits of laughter. The old man turned back.

Sanin returned to the "White Swan" (he had left all his luggage in the salon) in a somewhat confused state of mind. The conversation held in German, French, and Italian, still rang in his ears. "Betrothed!" he whispered as he lay in bed in the modest room he had taken. "And what a lovely creature! But why have I remained here?"

On the following day, however, he sent a letter to his friend at Berlin.

VIII.

He had hardly time to dress himself the next morning, when the waiter announced the arrival of a couple of gentlemen. One of them proved to be Emile; the other, a showy, well-grown, good-looking young man, was Herr Klüber, the future husband of the beautiful Gemma. One would have thought, from his appearance, that no shop in Frankfort could have produced a more polite, respectable, grave, and amiable young man than Herr Klüber. The unapproachable neatness of his dress was only equaled by the dignity of his carriage and by the elegance of his manner, which, though rather affected and constrained, like that of an Englishman, (he had spent a couple of years in England,) was nevertheless elegant and taking. One glance was sufficient to show that this handsome, correct, properly-trained and cleanly-washed young man, was accustomed to bend to his betters and to command his inferiors, and that behind the counter he must unavoidably inspire respect even in the purchasers themselves! As to his supernatural integrity—there could not be a shade of doubt about it; his stiffly-starched collar testified the fact undeniably! and his voice was such as one might expect: deep and self-confident; not too loud, and even with a tone of affability in it. In this latter tone of voice it must have been particularly convenient for him to give his commands to those serving beneath him, as for instance, "Will you please show that piece of Lyons velvet!" or else, "Hand a chair to that lady!" Herr Klüber commenced by introducing himself, during which ceremony he bent his body in so gentlemanly a way, and drew his feet together and cracked his heels so politely, that every one who could have seen him, would have felt convinced that the linen and mental capacities of this young man were surely of the first quality! The finish of his ungloved hand, (in the left, which had a Swedish glove neatly drawn over it, he held a glossy, shining hat with his other glove lying inside it,) modestly but resolutely extended to Sania, surpassed all credit: each nail was perfect in its kind! He communicated to Sanin, in the choi-

cest of German, his desire to evince his respect and readiness to serve the foreigner, who had done such great service to the brother of his intended; saying which words, he waved the hand that held the hat in the direction of Emile, who suddenly feeling very much embarrassed, turned to the window and put his finger into his mouth. Herr Klüber said in addition, "that it would give him much pleasure to be able to assist the foreigner in any way that lay in his power." Sanin replied, also in German, but not without some difficulty, that he would be very happy . . . that the service he had rendered had been but trifling; . . . and then requested his visitors to be seated. Herr Klüber thanked him, and instantly lifted his coat-tails and let himself down on a chair; but he seemed to seat himself so insecurely and unsteadily, that it was impossible not to suppose that he had simply sat down through politeness and would immediately rise again. The supposition proved correct; he rose without much delay, and making two or three steps very gingerly, as if he were dancing, expressed his regret at not being able to stay longer, as he was hurrying to his business—and duty came before every thing else! but to-morrow being Sunday, he, with the consent of Frau Lenore and Fräulein Gemma, had arranged a pleasure-trip to Soden, to which he had the honor of inviting the foreign gentleman, and he cherished a hope that he would not refuse to grace the party with his presence. Sanin did not refuse to grace it with his presence, and Herr Klüber made his low bow and disappeared in all the glory of a delicate, light-brown pair of trowsers, and making a creaking noise with his bran-new boots.

IX.

Emile, who continued standing with his face to the window, even after Sanin had asked him to sit down, turned round abruptly as soon as his future brother-in-law had left the room, and blushing with childlike embarrassment, asked Sanin whether he would allow him to stay a little longer with him.

"I feel much better to-day," he said, "but the doctor has forbidden me to work."

"Do stay! you are not at all in my way," returned Sanin, who, like every true Russian, was glad to catch at any thing rather than be driven to the necessity of finding himself occupation.

Emile thanked him, and in a very short time made himself quite at home with Sanin: he examined his things and asked him about nearly every article, where it was bought and what it was worth. He assisted him with his shaving, and told him it was a pity he did not allow his mustache to grow; he acquainted him with many details concerning his mother, his sister, Pantaleone, and even Tartaglia, and described the mode of life of each. All the shyness with which he had hitherto been afflicted had left him, and he suddenly felt himself strangely attracted toward Sanin, not because the latter had saved his life the day before, but because he found him such a sympathetic man. He very soon confided all his secrets to him, and dwelt with great force on his mother's wish to make a merchant out of him—when, he said, he knew, for certain, that he was born to be an artist, a musician, a singer, that the stage was his real vocation; even Pantaleone encouraged him, but Herr Klüber upheld his mother, over whom he had great influence; that the proposal of making a merchant of him proceeded entirely from Herr Klüber, according to whose notions there was no profession in the world to equal that of a merchant! To sell cloth and velvets, and to cheat the public, and to charge them "*Narren oder Russen-Preise*," (fools' or Russian prices,) this was his ideal of a profession!

"Well, but now we must be going home," he exclaimed, as soon as Sanin had finished his toilet and had written his letter to Berlin.

"It is so early yet," observed Sanin.

"That is of no consequence," returned Emile, going up to him in a caressing way. "Come! we shall turn into the post-office first, and then go home; Gemma will be so glad to see you! You will take uncheon with us, and

you might say a word for me to mamma about my career. . . ."

"Well, come along," said Sanin; and they both went out.

X.

Gemma was indeed glad to see him, and Frau Lenore gave him a very friendly welcome; it was evident that he had made a favorable impression on both ladies on the preceding evening. Emile ran off to see after the luncheon, but not without previously whispering to Sanin to be sure not to forget.

"I shall not forget," answered Sanin. Frau Lenore was not feeling very well: she was suffering from a headache, and, reclining in an arm-chair, was trying to keep herself quiet. Gemma was dressed in a loose yellow morning gown, with a black leather belt round her waist; she also looked tired and pale; dark lines encircled her eyes, but they did not take away from their brilliancy, while the pallor of her face added to the sweetness and purity of her classic features. Sanin was that morning especially struck by the beauty of her hands; whenever she raised them to arrange her dark and glossy curls, he could not tear his gaze away from her long and tapering fingers.

The day was a very warm one. After luncheon, Sanin rose to take his departure; but he was told that in such oppressive weather it was best to keep in one place—to which he agreed, and accordingly staid where he was. In the back-room, where they were all seated, the air was very cool, and the windows looked out into a small garden overgrown with acacias. Quantities of bees and wasps hummed busily and greedily in the thick acacia branches all heavily laden with golden flowers, and their ceaseless humming penetrated into the room through the half-closed shutters and closely-drawn blinds: it told of the sultriness pervading the air outside—thus adding to the pleasant coolness of the shady retreat in-doors.

Sanin conversed a great deal as he had done on the previous evening, but not about Russia or Russian life. Anxious to please his young friend, who was sent off imme-

diately after luncheon to Herr Klüber—to practice book-keeping—he directed the conversation to the comparative advantages and disadvantages of Art and Commerce. He was not, of course, surprised to hear Frau Lenore support the advantages of Commerce—he had expected as much—but Gemma likewise shared her mother's opinions.

"If one is to be an artist, and especially a singer," the old lady continued, energetically gesticulating with her hands, "one must certainly occupy the first place!—the second is not worth having; and who knows whether one would ever be capable of attaining the first!" Pantaleone, who also joined in the discussion, (owing to his long services and old age, he was even allowed to sit down in the presence of his mistress; generally speaking, Italians are not particular about etiquette,)—Pantaleone, of course, was a strong upholder of Art. It is true, his arguments were rather weak: he kept reasoning chiefly on the necessity of possessing *un estro d'ispirazione*—certain bursts of inspiration. Frau Lenore observed that he doubtlessly had possessed this *estro*, and notwithstanding . . . "I had enemies," said Pantaleone sternly. "Yes, but how canst thou tell that Emile will be free from them, supposing even that this *estro* does reveal itself in him?" "Well, well; make a tradesman of him," muttered Pantaleone, provoked, "but Giovan' Battista would never have acted in this manner, although he himself was but a confectioner!" "Giovan' Battista, my husband, was an honorable man—and if in his youth he ever did go astray . . ." But the old man would listen to no more and withdrew, muttering reproachfully, "Ah! Giovan' Battista!" Gemma insisted that, if Emile really felt himself to be a patriot, and wished to devote all his strength to the liberation of Italy, why, then, of course, for such a grand and sacred cause he might sacrifice his future—but not for the stage! Here Frau Lenore grew perturbed and entreated her daughter at least not to interfere with her brother, and to rest contented that she herself was such a desperate Republican! Having given utterance to these words, Frau Lenore groaned and complained of her head, which, she said, "was ready to

burst." (Frau Lenore, in compliment to her visitor, spoke in French to her daughter.)

Gemma at once commenced attending on her mother. She blew gently on her forehead, cooling it first of all with eau de Cologne, kissed her softly, laid a pillow under her head, forbade her to say another word, and kissed her again. Then turning to Sanin, she told him, in a partly jesting, partly pathetic voice—what a good mother she was, and what a belle she had been in her day! "What am I saying? had been! Why, she is charming even now. Only look at her eyes!" Saying this, she drew out her handkerchief, covered her mother's over with it—then slowly drawing the handkerchief down again, exposed by degrees her forehead, eyebrows, and eyes. She waited a second, and then asked her mother to open her eyes. Frau Lenore obeyed her, and Gemma gave a cry of admiration, (Frau Lenore's eyes were certainly very fine,) and quickly passing the handkerchief over the lower and less regular portion of her mother's face, she kissed her fondly again and again. Frau Lenore smiled and turned away, and put her daughter aside with assumed anger; Gemma likewise pretended to wrestle with her, and then caressed her—not in a cat-like manner, nor yet in the French way, but with that Italian grace so full of force. Frau Lenore at last declared that she was feeling very tired. . . . Then Gemma persuaded her to take a short nap where she was sitting, while she and the Russian gentleman—"avec le monsieur Russe"—would keep so still, so still . . . like small mice, . . . "Comme des petites souris." Frau Lenore smiled in answer, closed her eyes, and drawing several heavy sighs, fell off into a doze. Gemma took a seat near her mother and never once moved, she only occasionally lifted the finger of one hand, while with the other hand she supported her mother's pillow, and turning sideways to Sanin would say gently "hush" if the latter happened to make the least movement. He sat at last like one spellbound, and gazed with all his soul at the living picture before him: the half-darkened room, with bright fresh roses glimmering here and there in green old

fashioned glasses—the sleeping figure of the old lady, with her hands folded peacefully in her lap, and her kind but weary-looking face framed in a snow-white pillow—and this young, impulsive girl, so good, sensible, pure, and unspeakably beautiful, with her dark, deep, shadowy and yet luminous eyes. . . . What was it all? A dream? A romance? . . . And how came he to be there?

XI.

There was a ring at the bell of the outer door, and a young peasant-boy in a fur cap and red waistcoat entered the shop. Since morning there had not been a single customer. "This is the kind of business we carry on!" Frau Lenore had observed to Sanin, with a sigh, during luncheon. The old lady continued dozing; Gemma feared to draw her hand away from the pillow, and whispered to Sanin, "Do go into the shop for me!" Sanin instantly went off on tiptoes. The peasant wanted a quarter of a pound of peppermint lozenges. "How much money am I to take for them?" asked Sanin of Gemma in a whisper through the door. "Six kreutzers!" she answered in the same low voice. Sanin weighed off a quarter of a pound, found a piece of paper, rolled it up into the shape of a horn, put the lozenges in, dropped them, put them in again, once more dropped them, finally succeeded in delivering the packet, and received the money. . . . The boy kept looking at him in astonishment, twisting his cap about, which he held against his chest, while in the next room, Gemma, keeping her lips firmly closed, was dying with laughter. No sooner had this customer withdrawn, than another, and a third, made their appearance.

. . . "I suppose I must have a lucky hand," thought Sanin. The second wanted a glass of almond-milk; the third, half a pound of sweets. Sanin satisfied their demands, making a great noise with the spoons, moving about the saucers, and awkwardly getting his fingers into the jars and boxes. From the accounts it was proved afterward that he had charged too little for the almond drink, and had taken two extra kreutzers for the sweets. Gemma could

not help laughing inwardly the whole time during these proceedings, and even Sanin felt conscious of unusual gayety and happiness. He thought he could have stood a century behind that counter selling sweets and almond-milk, while Gemma gazed at him through the door, with friendly, laughing eyes, and the summer sun, struggling through the dense foliage of the chestnuts in front of the windows, filled the whole room with golden-green midday beams and midday shadows, and while the heart grew softened with sweet feelings of indolence and listlessness, and of happy early youth!

The fourth customer wanted a cup of coffee, and Pantaleone had to be called in order to get it, (Emile was still absent, learning book-keeping.) Sanin returned to the next room, seated himself again next Gemma, and found Frau Lenore still dozing, to the great delight of her daughter. "Mamma's headache always leaves her during her sleep," she said. Sanin spoke in a whisper about what he had sold, and inquired in a serious tone about the prices of the different things for sale in the shop. Gemma, in an equally serious voice, named all the prices he had wished to know, while, at the same time, they both laughed inwardly, as though feeling thoroughly conscious of acting a highly amusing comedy. Suddenly, an organ-grinder, outside, struck up an air out of *Freischütz*: "*Durch die Felder, durch die Auen.*" . . . The shrill, discordant tones died away, trembling and quivering in the still air. Gemma started. . . . "He will awaken my mother!" Sanin, without losing a moment, rushed off into the street, thrust several kreutzers into the organ-grinder's hand, and ordered him to cease playing and to go farther away. When he came back to the room, Gemma thanked him by slightly nodding her head, and, smiling pensively, began singing, in an undertone, a pretty melody of Weber's, in which Max gives expression to all the fears and doubts that arise in first love. She then asked Sanin whether he had ever heard *Freischütz*, whether he liked Weber, and added that, although an Italian, she nevertheless liked such music better than any other. From Weber, the con-

versation glided on to poetry and romance, and to Hoff man, who was still at that time read by every one.

In the mean while, Frau Lenore continued sleeping, and even slightly snoring, and the rays of the sun, entering in narrow streaks through the shutters, were imperceptibly but gradually shifting and traveling along the floor, the furniture, Gemma's dress, and across the leaves and petals of the flowers.

XII.

Gemma, it seemed, was not a great lover of Hoffman; she even found him tiresome. The hazy, queer, northern element of his stories was incomprehensible to her bright southern nature. "They are all inventions, written for the amusement of children," she said persuasively, and not without some contempt. She also had a dim sense of the absence of poetry in his works. But there was one novel of his, the title of which she could not then recollect, which she had liked exceedingly; correctly speaking, it was only the commencement that had pleased her; the end she had either not read, or had forgotten it. The subject was about a young man who chances to meet, somewhere or other—in a pastry-cook's shop, if her memory did not misgive her—a young Greek girl of striking beauty; she is accompanied by an odd, mysterious, and cross-looking old man. The young man falls in love with the girl the moment he beholds her; she looks at him in such a pleading way, as though she besought him to liberate her. . . . He leaves the shop for a moment, and returning again finds the girl and the old man both gone; he rushes out in search of her, stumbles across their recent footsteps, follows their tracks, but can never find them again. The lovely girl disappears from him forever—but no earthly power can make him forget her pleading look, and he is forever after haunted with the idea that, perhaps, all the happiness that life had in store for him, had slipped away, never to return again. . . .

Hoffman hardly ended his tale in this way ; at all events, it was thus that it had remained fixed on Gemma's memory

"It seems to me," she murmured, "that similar meetings and partings are of more frequent occurrence than we imagine."

Sanin remained silent . . . and a few moments later talked of Herr Klüber. It was the first time that he spoke about him; he had not recollected him until that moment.

It was Gemma's turn to be silent now: she became pensive, and slightly biting the nail of her fore-finger, turned her eyes away to another direction. She then spoke in praise of her lover, reminded Sanin of the pleasure-trip arranged for the morrow by Herr Klüber, and, turning a quick look on Sanin, grew silent again.

He was considerably embarrassed what to say next. But at this moment Emile burst noisily into the room, awakened Frau Lenore, and extricated Sanin from his difficult position. The old lady rose from the chair, Pantaleone came in and announced that dinner was ready. The friend of the family—the ex-singer and servant—performed likewise the duties of cook.

XIII.

Sanin did not go away even after dinner. They detained him under pretense of the great heat, and when it got cooler, they all proposed to go into the garden to drink coffee in the shade of the acacia-tree. He consented. He was feeling so unspeakably happy. In the monotonously peaceful and smooth current of our lives great joys lie deeply hidden, and in these he now reveled, not demanding any special happiness from that day, yet also not giving a thought to the morrow or the past. What was not the mere presence of such a girl as Gemma worth to him? He was shortly to be parted from her, and probably forever; but while the same small boat, as in the romance of Uhland, carried them both along life's short stream, why should he not be happy and enjoy himself? And all around looked pleasant and smiling to this happy traveler. Frau Lenore proposed to him to have a battle with her and Pantaleone at "*tresette*," taught him this simple Italian game of cards, and won several kreutzers of him; then Pantaleone, at

Emile's request, made Tartaglia go through all his tricks, and Tartaglia jumped over a stick, barked, sneezed, shut the door with his nose, brought out a trodden-down shoe of his master's, and finally, with an old hussar's cap on his head, represented Marshal Bernadotte submitting himself to the cruel reproaches of the Emperor Napoleon for his treachery.

Pantaleone, of course, acted the part of Napoleon, and personified him faithfully: crossed his hands over his breast, put on a three-cornered hat over his eyes, and spoke harshly and sharply in French; but heavens! what French it was! Tartaglia sat before his sovereign, his body doubled up, his tail tucked under him, and in great fear and trembling, winking and blinking from beneath the hussar-cap placed awry on his head; from time to time, when Napoleon raised his voice, Bernadotte stood up on his hind legs. "*Fuori, traditore!*" at last screamed Napoleon, forgetting in his great excitement that he should maintain his French character to the last; and Bernadotte rushed precipitately under the sofa, but soon reappeared again, barking joyously, as though to let them all know that the performance was at an end. The audience was extremely amused, and Sanin more than the rest.

Gemma had a particularly pleasant low-toned laugh, accompanied by a most amusing little chuckle. Sanin was charmed by it, and could have kissed her for that little chuckle alone!

The evening at last drew to a close, and his conscience told him it was time to go. Bidding them all good-night several times, telling them all over and over again, "until to morrow!" (Emile he even embraced,) Sanin at last went home, carrying with him in his heart the image of this young girl, now gay, now pensive, now calm and even indifferent, but always sweetly attractive. Her gray eyes, now widely-opened, bright and happy as the day, now shaded by her drooping eyelashes, and dark and deep as the night, haunted him and pervaded all other objects and scenes.

To Herr Klüber, to the reasons which had detained him

at Frankfort, in a word, to all that had agitated him on the previous evening, he had not given one single thought.

XIV.

It is, however, time that we should say a few words about Sanin.

Firstly: he was not at all bad-looking. He was tall and well-proportioned, had pleasant though somewhat irregular features, kind, small blue eyes, golden hair, and a pink and white complexion. But what charmed one most about him, was his childlike gayety, his trusting, frank, though, at first sight, not brilliant expression—an expression which, in former days, was stamped on all the scions of noble families, “sons in the image of their fathers,” good young noble-men’s sons, born and educated in our wild semi-steppe countries; with a hesitating step, a lisping voice, and an innocent smile—in one word, with freshness and health, and with a softness, a delicate softness pervading his whole nature—such was Sanin in appearance. In the second place, he was no simpleton, but had contrived to pick up some knowledge here and there, and in spite of his travels abroad, he was still entirely unspoilt; the excitement that was prevailing amongst the youth of that period was but little known to him.

Of late years, our literature, after fruitless attempts in search of “new characters,” has produced novel specimens in the form of young men bent on appearing fresh—fresh as Flensburg oysters imported to Russia. Sanin did not resemble them. If we must indeed liken him to any thing, let it rather be to a young apple-tree newly planted in our rich gardens—or, better still, to a pampered, smooth, thick-legged, delicate, three-year-old horse, formerly belonging to a gentleman’s stud, and who was now being driven with a curb. . . . Those who came across Sanin at a later period, when life’s trials and troubles had fallen heavily on him, and all his youthful ardor had long since died out of him, saw him as a very different man.

The following day, Sanin was still lying in bed, when

Emile, in his holiday dress, with a small cane in his hand and sinelling strongly of pomatum, rushed into his room and told him that Herr Klüber would arrive instantly with a carriage, that the weather promised to be wonderfully fine, that they had finished all their preparations, but that their mother could not join them, owing to another bad headache. He hurried Sanin, declaring there was not a moment to be lost. And it was true; Herr Klüber found Sanin still busily occupied with his toilet. He knocked at the door, entered, bowed, said he was quite ready to wait for him any time—and sat down, leaning elegantly on his hat, which he placed on his knees. The good-looking clerk had dressed himself in his best, and had scented himself to such an extent that every movement of his was accompanied by a strong aromatic whiff. He had arrived in a large open carriage or landau, drawn by a couple of strong, full-grown, but by no means handsome-looking horses. In a quarter of an hour's time, Sanin, Klüber, and Emile dashed up triumphantly to the door of the confectionery-shop in this very identical carriage. Frau Roselli firmly refused to be of the party; Gemma wished to remain at home with her mother, but the latter would not hear of such a thing.

"I do not require any one," said the old lady in an assuring voice. "I shall go to sleep. I should have sent Pantaleone with you; but if I did that, there would be no one to serve in the shop."

"May we take Tartaglia?" asked Emile.

"Of course you may."

Tartaglia immediately struggled up joyfully on to the box, and seated himself there with an air of contentment; one could see that he was used to the elevated position he occupied. Gemma had put on a large straw hat with brown ribbons; it was bent down in front, shading her face as far as her lips, which were as blooming and as fresh as the delicate petals of a rose while her teeth gleamed white and pure as a child's. She placed herself on the back seat, next to Sanin; Klüber and Emile sat opposite. Frau Lenore's pale face appeared at the window; Gemma waved her handkerchief to her, and they started off.

XV.

Soden is a small town situated within a quarter of an hour's drive from Frankfort. It lies in a picturesque locality on the Taunus hills, and is celebrated, in Russia, for its waters, which are, it is presumed, beneficial to children with delicate chests. The inhabitants of Frankfort go there chiefly for pleasure, as Soden boasts of a lovely park, and of numerous "*Wirthschaften*" or restaurants, where beer and coffee may be drunk under the shadow of fine old lime and maple trees. The road from Frankfort to Soden runs along the right bank of the Main, and is bordered the whole way by fruit-trees. As long as the carriage rolled along the good chaussée, Sanin watched Gemma stealthily, to see how she would behave with her lover; it was the first time that he saw them together. She was very quiet and simple in her manner, but rather more reserved and serious than usual; Herr Klüber had assumed the air of an indulgent tutor, giving himself and his subordinates a quiet and orderly holiday treat. Any special attentions to Gemma, or, as the French say, any *empressement*, Sanin did not observe. It was quite evident that Herr Klüber considered the matter as settled, and for that reason did not think any demonstrations on his part were necessary. But his condescending manner never left him for a moment. During the long walk they took before dinner, in the woods and valleys beyond Soden, even while admiring the beauties of nature, his rhapsodies bore the same tone of condescension, tinged occasionally with the customary severity of a tutor. For instance, when speaking of some small rivulet, he observed that its course followed too direct a line, instead of forming a few picturesque curves; he also disapproved of the way in which a chaffinch was flying along—it did not vary the position of its little legs sufficiently to please him! Gemma was not in low spirits; on the contrary, she seemed to be enjoying herself; and still she was not like the same bright Gemma Sanin had known before; it was not that a gloom

had cast its shadow over her face—for her beauty was more radiant than ever—it was her soul that seemed overclouded and heavy. With her parasol lifted and her gloves neatly buttoned, she walked along quietly and demurely, as all well-educated young ladies are trained to do, and spoke but little. Emile as well as Sanin seemed somewhat shy and constrained. The German language, in which the conversation was being carried on, was also an additional source of embarrassment to Sanin. Tartaglia was the only one amongst them who seemed thoroughly light-hearted. Barking wildly, he raced after the thrushes, jumped over the ditches, over trunks and crooked branches of trees, and dashing madly into the water, lapped at it, shook himself, whined with delight, and, strengthened with fresh vigor, rushed off again with his little red tongue dangling far out of his mouth. Herr Klüber did all that he thought was requisite towards entertaining the company; he invited them all to rest under the shadow of a wide-spreading oak, and taking out of his side-pocket a small book entitled, "*Knällerbsen, oder du sollst und wirst lachen!*" commenced reading some choice anecdotes with which it seemed to be filled. He read about twenty of them aloud; they did not, however, awaken much merriment. Sanin was the only one who, out of politeness, contrived to force a smile, while Herr Klüber, at the termination of each anecdote, gave vent to a short, businesslike, and at the same time condescending laugh. About twelve o'clock the whole party returned to Soden, to the best inn there.

It was time they should arrange about dinner. Herr Klüber proposed they should dine in a closed summer house—"im Gartensalon," but Gemma rebelled against such an idea, and declared she would dine nowhere but in the open air, in the garden, at one of the small tables placed in front of the inn; that she was tired of always seeing the same faces before her, and wanted a change. Several of these tables were already occupied by fresh arrivals.

While Herr Klüber, who had condescendingly succumbed to the caprices of his lady-love, was absent consulting

with the head waiter, Gemma stood motionless, with her eyes cast down, and her lips firmly pressed together; she felt conscious of Sanin's unflinching, inquiring gaze, and it seemed to be annoying her. Herr Klüber shortly returned with the announcement that dinner would be ready in half an hour, and asked them if they would have a game of skittles in the mean while, adding, that this exercise was very good for the appetite, ha, ha, ha! He proved himself a skillful player; when throwing the ball, he assumed the most wonderfully youthful attitudes, played with great smartness and muscular strength, and made the most elegant flourishes with his foot! He was an athlete in his own way—and was splendidly formed. His hands were so white and pretty, and he wiped them with such a handsome, golden-variegated, Indian silk handkerchief! At last dinner was served, and they all adjourned to their small table.

XVI.

Who does not know the *menu* of a German dinner? Watery soup with knobby force-meat balls and cinnamon, boiled beef, as dry as a cork and with hard white fat about it, slimy potatoes, puffy-looking beet-root and minced horseradish, bluish-colored eels with capers and vinegar, and lastly, the inevitable "*Mehlspeise*," something resembling a pudding baked with preserves and served with a sour red sauce. But then the beer and wine compensate for all other deficiencies! This indeed was the kind of dinner to which the Soden inn-keeper treated his visitors. However, the dinner went off very well. It certainly lacked a spirit of animation, which could not even be roused when Herr Klüber proposed a toast to "those we love," ("*Was wir lieben.*") Every body was most subdued and proper. After dinner, coffee was served, genuine German coffee, watery and of a red-brown color. Herr Klüber then very politely asked Gemma's permission to light a cigar, . . . and it was at this moment that an occurrence of a rather unexpected and unpleasant, and even indecorous, nature took place. One of the neighboring tables happened to be

occupied by some officers of the Mayence garrison. From their glances and whispers, it was easy to perceive that they were struck by Gemma's beauty: one of them, who had probably spent some time at Frankfort, looked at her as though the face were familiar to him: he evidently knew who she was. He rose suddenly from his chair, and with his glass in his hand—the officers had been drinking freely, and the whole table was covered with bottles,—approached the table where Gemma was seated. He was a young man with light hair, and with rather a pleasant and genial countenance; but the wine he had imbibed had distorted his features; his cheeks were burning, and his inflamed eyes had a wild and bold expression in them. His friends at first had tried to detain him, and then allowed him to proceed, curious to know what the result would be.

Staggering slightly, the officer stood still in front of Gemma, and in a forced, loud voice, which betrayed, in spite of his efforts, his struggle to appear sober, said "I drink to the health of the most beautiful bar-maid in all Frankfort—in the whole world," (here he dashed his glass down on the table;) "and in return I take this flower, plucked by her own divine little fingers!" He took up from the table the rose that was lying close to Gemma's plate. At the first moment she was overcome with astonishment, grew frightened and deadly pale; . . . then her fear changed to indignation, she blushed to the roots of her hair, and her eyes, directed straight at her offender, grew dim and dusk, then flashed with uncontrollable anger. It was this last look that probably brought him to his senses, as he immediately muttered something incoherently, bowed, and returned again to his comrades. He was met with laughter and clapping of hands.

Herr Klüber started from his seat, and drawing himself up to his full height and placing his hat on his head, said, with an air of great dignity, and in not too loud a voice: "This is unheard-of! unheard-of insolence!" ("Unerhört unerhörte Freiheit;") and calling in a stern voice to the waiter, demanded his bill instantly, . . . and ordered the horses to be harnessed, saying that this was not a fit

place for respectable people, since they were liable to be subjected to such insults! At these words, Gemma, who was still sitting motionless at the table with her breast heaving wildly, turned her eyes to Herr Klüber and cast on him the same fixed, angry look she had darted at the officer. Emile was trembling with rage.

"Rise, mein Fräulein," said Herr Klüber, in the same stern voice, "it is not proper for you to stay here. We shall go inside the inn."

Gemma rose silently; he gave her his arm and led her toward the inn, with a majestic step, which, like his whole bearing, increased in majesty and haughtiness the further he withdrew from the scene of this unpleasant adventure. Poor Emile stole away after them.

But while Herr Klüber was settling the account with the waiter, who was deprived of his fee, by way of a fine, Sanin walked up to the table occupied by the officers, and turning to the one who had insulted Gemma, (he was in the act of handing round her rose to each of his comrades to smell,) said in a distinct voice in French: "Sir, your behavior, a minute ago, was not that of a gentleman, but a disgrace to the uniform you wear, and I have come to tell you that you are an ill-bred scoundrel!" The young man started to his feet, but an officer, older than himself, caught hold of his arm, kept him back, and, turning to Sanin, asked him, also in French, whether he was a relation, or a brother, or a suitor of the young girl's.

"I am an utter stranger," exclaimed Sanin; "I am a Russian, but I can not witness such insolent conduct with indifference. Here is my card and my address: you are at liberty to call on me."

Having said these words, Sanin threw down his card on the table, and at the same time snatched up Gemma's rose, which one of the officers had dropped on his plate. The young officer made a second attempt to rise, but was again held back by his comrade, who, muttering, "Dönhof, be quiet," ("Dönhof, sei still,") rose from his chair touched his hat, with his hand in a very respectful manner and in a polite tone of voice told Sanin that one of the offi

cers of their regiment would do himself the honor of calling upon him to-morrow. Sanin answered by a stiff bow and hurried back to his friends.

Herr Klüber pretended not to have noticed Sanin's absence, nor his explanation with the officers; he urged the coachman to hasten with the carriage, and went into a great passion at his want of alacrity. Gemma also never said a word to Sanin, did not even look at him; but her contracted eyebrows, her pale and compressed lips, and her motionless attitude, plainly showed the troubled state of her mind. Emile was the only one who longed to speak to Sanin, and to question him: he had seen how Sanin had approached the officers and given them something in the shape of a piece of paper, a note or a card. The poor boy's heart was beating violently, his cheeks were flaming, and he felt as if he could have thrown himself on Sanin's neck and burst into tears, or thrashed those hateful officers at a moment's notice. He, however, restrained his feelings, and contented himself by attentively watching each movement of his chivalrous Russian friend!

The carriage was at last ready, and they all got in. Emile scrambled up to the box with Tartaglia; he felt he could breathe more freely there, and besides, Klüber, who had become thoroughly distasteful to him, was not before his eyes.

Herr Klüber never ceased from talking the whole way home; . . . but nobody answered him, as nobody had a thought or a feeling in common with him. He kept persistently regretting that his advice had not been followed when he had proposed to have dinner in one of the small summer-houses. No disagreeable things could have happened then! He next expressed some bold and liberal opinions concerning the unpardonable indulgence that was shown by the government to the officers, and of the entire absence of discipline amongst them—while but a small amount of consideration was shown to the burgher-class in society, and the consequence was that feelings of discontent

were engendered, which, in the course of time, led to rebellions and revolutions. Had we not an instance of it, (here he sighed with an appearance of feeling and sternness,) a sad instance of it in France! Nevertheless, he personally respected power, and never, never! would turn revolutionist—but he could not all the same help expressing his disapprobation at the sight of such bold and outrageous behavior! He then added a few more general remarks on morality and immorality, on the proprieties of life and self-respect.

While Herr Klüber was thus discoursing, Gemma, who even during the walk before dinner had not disguised her feelings of dissatisfaction with her lover, and for that very reason had kept somewhat aloof from Sanin—feeling confused in his presence—Gemma now showed plainly that she was ashamed of Herr Klüber! Toward the end of their drive, she grew more troubled, and although she never addressed herself to Sanin, she looked at him beseechingly. . . . His pity for her was keener than his contempt for Herr Klüber, and he even secretly and half-consciously rejoiced at all that had happened during that day, in spite of the challenge that was awaiting him on the morrow.

This pleasure party of torture came to a termination at last. In handing Gemma out of the carriage, Sanin, without one word, placed the rose he had rescued in her hand; he had no wish to enter the house, although the evening had but just commenced, and Gemma did not ask him in. Besides, Pantaleone, who had come out to meet them on the stairs, told them Frau Lenore was asleep. Emile bid Sanin good-by very shyly, and in a tone of awe and admiration. Herr Klüber drove Sanin back to his hotel, and parted from him in a very constrained manner. Notwithstanding his vast amount of self-possession, the correct-minded man was feeling rather awkward and uncomfortable. But each of them had felt the same.

With Sanin, however, this feeling did not last long. It was changed to an indescribable state of joy and rapture. He walked about the room, incapable of a thought, whistling and thoroughly pleased with himself.

XVII.

"I shall wait for the officer until ten o'clock," he thought to himself on the following morning, while finishing his toilet, "and if he is not here by that time, he may search for me!" But the Germans are early risers; the clock had barely struck nine, when the waiter came to announce to Sanin that Sub-lieutenant Von Richter requested to see him. Sanin hurriedly put on his coat and ordered the gentleman to be shown up. Mr. Von Richter, contrary to Sanin's expectations, proved to be a very young man, almost a boy. He strove hard to give his beardless face an expression of importance, but with no success: he even was not able to conceal his confusion—and, in sitting down, caught his foot in his sword and almost fell over the chair. Stammering and stuttering, he informed Sanin, in very bad French, that he was come with a message from his comrade, Baron Von Dönhof; the substance of this message was the demand of an apology from Mr. Von Szanin for his insulting language on the preceding evening; and if such apology should be refused by Mr. Von Szanin, Baron Von Dönhof desired satisfaction. Sanin replied that he had no intention of apologizing, and was ready to give whatever satisfaction was required. Mr. Von Richter, still stammering, then asked him, with whom, at what time, and in what place, were the necessary arrangements to be made. Sanin told him, he might return to him in a couple of hours, and in the mean while he, Sanin, would endeavor to find himself a second. ("Who the devil," thought he to himself, "shall I ask to be my second?") Mr. Von Richter rose and took leave of Sanin, but on reaching the door, stood still on the threshold as though conscience-stricken, and turning to him, said in a hesitating voice, that his comrade, Baron Von Dönhof, had felt himself, in a certain degree, to blame in the proceedings of last night, and would therefore be satisfied with any "small apology"—"des exghizes léchères." To this Sanin replied that he most decidedly would not make any apologies whatever, as he

did not consider himself to be in the wrong. "In that case," returned Mr. Von Richter, changing color still more, "you must exchange some friendly pistol shots—des gous de bisdolet à l'amiable!"

"I do not at all understand you," observed Sanin; "are we to shoot into the air?"

"Oh! no, that is not what I mean," lisped the sub-lieutenant, covered with confusion; "but I presumed that, as this was a matter between two gentlemen. . . . I shall have an interview with your second," he continued, interrupting himself—and then withdrew.

Sanin threw himself into a chair as soon as the officer had retired, and fixed his eyes on the ground. "What is the meaning of all this? What sudden whirlwind have I got into? The past and future are enveloped in mist—have vanished from me. I only know that I am at Frankfort on the eve of fighting a duel." He suddenly recollect ed a rhyme that a mad aunt of his used to hum and dance to, and which ran as follows:

"Sub-lieutenant!
My little gherkin!
My little Cupid!
Come, little dove, and dance with me!"

He laughed aloud and sang, as she had done, "Sub-lieutenant, come, little dove, and dance with me!" "However, I must be active, and not lose time," he exclaimed in a loud voice; then, jumping up, he saw Pantaleone standing before him with a note in his hand.

"I knocked several times, but you took no notice—so I thought you were not at home," muttered the old man, delivering a note to him. "It is from the Signorina Gemma." Sanin took the note mechanically, broke the seal and read it. Gemma wrote that she was feeling exceedingly troubled concerning what had happened, and wished to see him immediately.

"The Signorina is feeling very anxious on your account," said Pantaleone, who was evidently acquainted with the contents of the note; "she desired me to see what you were about, and to bring you back with me."

Sanin cast his eyes on the old man, and grew thoughtful. A sudden bright idea had flashed across him. At the first moment it seemed a strange and impossible one. . . .

"But why not?" he said interrogatively to himself. "Mr. Pantaleone!" he uttered aloud.

The old man started, thrust his chin into his neck-cloth, and looked fixedly at Sanin.

"You know," continued Sanin, "what happened yesterday?"

Pantaleone bit his lips and shook the heavy hair off his forehead. "I do know," (Emile had related it all to him immediately on his return home.)

"Ah! you know. Well, then, listen. An officer has just been here. That scoundrel challenges me to a duel. I have accepted his challenge. But I have no second. Will you be my second?" Pantaleone gave a shudder, and lifted his eyebrows so high that they entirely disappeared under his hanging hair.

"Are you really obliged to fight?" he said at last, in Italian; until then he had been speaking in French.

"I must certainly fight. To act otherwise would be an eternal dishonor to myself."

"Hem! If I do not consent to be your second, will you try to get some one else?"

"I shall, . . . most assuredly."

Pantaleone cast his eyes down. "But allow me to ask you, Signor de Zanini, whether this duel of yours will not throw a shadow of suspicion over the reputation of a certain person?"

"I do not think so: but be that as it may, there is no help for it!"

"Hem!"—Pantaleone entirely disappeared into his neck-cloth. "Well, but that ferroflockto Kluberio—what of him?" he exclaimed suddenly, throwing his face upward.

"What of him? Nothing."

"Che!" Pantaleone shrugged his shoulders in disdain.

"I must, at all events, thank you," continued the old man in a hesitating voice, "that even in my present lowly condition you have recognized me as a man of some

worth—*un galant'uomo!* In thus acting, you have indeed proclaimed yourself to be a thorough *galant'uomo*. But I must take your offer into consideration."

"Time will not allow of that, my dear Ci . . . cippa . . ."

"Tolla," prompted the old man. "I only want a single hour for reflection. The daughter of my benefactors is involved in this. . . . And therefore, I must think it over, it is my bounden duty! . . . In an hour's time, . . . in three quarters of an hour you shall know my determination."

"Very well; I shall wait."

"But now . . . what answer shall I give the Signorina Gemma?"

Sanin took a piece of paper and wrote the following words: "Calm your anxiety, my dear friend; in three hours I shall be with you, and every thing will be explained. I thank you most sincerely for your interest in me"—then intrusted the note to Pantaleone.

The latter put it carefully away into his side-pocket, and again repeating, "In an hour's time!" made for the door; but he suddenly turned back again, ran up to Sanin, caught hold of his hand, and placing it on his breast and casting his eyes up to heaven, exclaimed, "Honorable youth! Noble heart! (*Nobil giovanotto! Gran cuore!*) allow a decrepit old man (*a un vecchiotto*) to press your manly right hand! (*la vostra valorosa destra!*)" He then jumped a few steps backward, waved his hands, and retired toward the door. Sanin followed him with his eyes, . . . took up a paper and commenced reading. But it was in vain; he could not understand a word he read.

XVIII.

After the lapse of an hour, the waiter again entered Sanin's room and handed him a soiled old visiting-card with the following words written on it: "Pantaleone

Cippatola of Varese, Court-Singer (*cantante di camera*) to his Royal Highness, the Duke of Modena;" and close upon the waiter came Pantaleone himself. He had changed his dress from top to toe. He had attired himself in a black dress-coat, worn brown with age, and a white piqué waistcoat, across which he sported a pinchbeck chain; a heavy carnelian seal hung low down on his narrow black trowsers. In his right hand he held a black hat made of hare-skin; in his left, two thick chamois leather gloves; his neck-cloth he had tied broader and higher than ever, and his shirt-frill was ornamented with a cat's-eye breastpin. On the fore-finger of his right hand he wore a ring representing two clasped hands with a flaming heart between a strong, close smell, a smell of camphor and musk, pervaded his whole person, while the troubled solemnity of his bearing would have overwhelmed the most indifferent spectator. Sanin rose to meet him.

"I am your second," said Pantaleone in French, and bent his whole body forward, turning out his feet, at the same time, like a dancing-master. "I am come to receive your instructions. Is it your wish to fight unmercifully?"

"Wherefore unmercifully, my dear Mr. Cippatola! I would not for the world retract the words I said yesterday, still I am no blood-sucker! . . . But wait a little; my adversary's second will be here directly. I shall go into the next room, and you may make your conditions with him. Believe me, I shall forever remember your services, and I thank you with all my heart."

"Honor above all!" answered Pantaleone, dropping into a chair, without waiting for Sanin to offer him a seat. "If that *ferroflockto spitzbubio*," continued he, confusing the French with Italian, "that tradesman Kluberio, had not sufficient sense to comprehend his own duty, or felt like a coward, why, so much the worse for him! . . . Low soul! . . . But as far as concerns the conditions of the duel, I am your man, and your interests are in my sacred care! . . . When I lived at Padua, there was a regiment of white dragoons stationed there, and I was very well acquainted with several of the officers! . . . Their code of

honor was well known to me. Besides, I frequently discussed these questions with your *principe Tarbuski*. . . . Do you think that officer will be here soon?"

"I expect him every moment—but here he comes," added Sanin, looking out into the street.

Pantaleone rose, looked at his watch, arranged his hair, and quickly tucked into his shoe a tape which was hanging from under his trowsers. The young sub-lieutenant entered, looking as red and confused as before.

Sanin introduced the seconds to each other. "*Mr. Von Richter, sous-lieutenant! Mr. Cippatola, artiste!*" The sub-lieutenant evinced somewhat of astonishment at the sight of the old man. . . . Oh! what would he have said, if some one had whispered to him at that moment, that the presented "artiste" was also in the habit of acting as cook! . . . But Pantaleone assumed the air of one to whom the participation in duels was quite a customary event most probably, the reminiscences of his theatrical career assisted him considerably on this occasion, and he acted the part of a second as though he were on the stage. He and the sub-lieutenant were silent for a few moments.

"Well? Let us commence!" broke in Pantaleone, the first to speak, and playing with his carnelian seal.

"Let us," answered the sub-lieutenant; "but the presence of one of the adversaries"

"I shall leave you, gentlemen," exclaimed Sanin; he bowed, went into his bedroom, and closed the door after him.

He threw himself on his bed, and his thoughts returned to Gemma; . . . but the conversation held by the seconds reached him through the closed door. It was carried on in French; they both murdered the language, each in his own way. Pantaleone again mentioned the dragoons at Padua and the *principe Tarbuski*—while the sub-lieutenant spoke of "*exghizes léchères*" and "*goup à l'amiapé*." But the old man would listen to no "*exghizes!*" To Sanin's great horror he launched out to his companion in a long explanation about a certain young and innocent girl, whose little finger was of greater value than all the

officers in the world, . . . (*oune zeune damigella, in nouenta, qu'a ella sola dans soun peti doa vale piu que tout le souffissé del mondo!*) and repeated several times with great warmth, “It is a shame! It is a shame! (*E ouna onta, ouna onta!*)” At first the sub-lieutenant took no notice of what he said, then, in a voice trembling with indignation, told him he had not come for the purpose of listening to moral sentiments . . .

“At your age it is very useful to listen to what is sensible!” exclaimed Pantaleone.

The contest between the two seconds became at times rather stormy; it continued longer than an hour, and was concluded, at last, with the following conditions: Baron von Dönhof and Mr. de Sanin were to fight a duel on the following day, at ten o’clock in the morning, in a small wood near Hanau, at a distance of twenty paces; each was to have the right of firing twice at a signal given by the seconds. The pistols were to be without hair-triggers and not rifled. Mr. von Richter withdrew when Pantaleone triumphantly opened the bed-room door, and communicating the result of the conference, exclaimed, “*Bravo Russo! Bravo giovanotto!* Thou shalt be the conqueror!”

After a few minutes’ time they both proceeded to Frau Roselli’s. Sanin previously made Pantaleone promise to keep the duel a dead secret. The only answer the old man made was to lift his finger, and screwing up his eyes, whispered twice, “*Segredezza!* (*Secrecy!*)” He had become younger in appearance and walked with a lighter step. All these unusual although likewise unpleasant events, had reminded him vividly of the time when he himself received and offered challenges, although indeed it was but on the stage. Baritones, as is well known, are great bullies in their *rôles*.

XIX.

Emile rushed out to meet Sanin—he had been watching his arrival for more than an hour—and, whispering quickly

into his ear that his mother was entirely ignorant of yesterday's proceedings, and that not even an allusion was to be made to the subject, and that he was again sent off to Klüber's to learn book-keeping! . . . and that he was determined not to go there and would hide himself somewhere—having communicated all this in a few seconds, he leaned on Sanin's shoulder, kissed him, and hurried down the street. On entering the shop, Gemma came forward to greet him; she strove to say a few words, but could not. Her lips trembled slightly, and her eyes wandered nervously away from his. He hastened to quiet her with assurances that the whole affair had come to an end . . . in a most ridiculous way.

"You had no one with you to-day?" she asked.

"One person did come—we had an explanation, . . . and we . . . we came to a most satisfactory understanding."

Gemma returned behind the counter.

"She does not believe me!" he thought, . . . and went into the next room, where he found Frau Lenore.

Her headache had passed away, but she was in a very melancholy frame of mind. She smiled pleasantly at him, at the same time warned him that he would find it dull with her to-day, as she was not in a fit state to amuse him. He sat down next to her and noticed that her eyelids were red and swollen.

"What is the matter with you, Frau Lenore; have you been crying?"

"Hush!" she whispered, pointing to the door where her daughter was. "Do not speak so loud."

"But why have you been crying?"

"O Mr. Sanin! I do not know myself!"

"Has any one offended you?"

"Oh! no; I suddenly felt very dull. I called to memory Giovan' Battista . . . my youth . . . How it has all passed away so soon. I am growing old, my friend—and the thought of old age is unbearable to me. I feel the same as I used to, . . . while old age is here . . . at hand!" Tears started into Frau Lenore's eyes. "I see

you look at me in astonishment. . . . But you too will grow old, my friend, and will know what a bitter trial it is!"

Sanin strove to console her, reminded her of her children in whom her own youth was revived, tried even to chaff her, assuring her that she was only waiting for compliments; . . . but she seriously asked him to cease joking, and he for the first time became convinced that such despondency, the despondency of coming old age—was not to be dispelled or condoled with; with patience it would pass away of its own accord. He proposed to have a game of *tresette* with her—he could think of nothing better. She immediately consented, and her spirits rose rapidly over the game.

Sanin played with her until dinner, and after dinner Pantaleone also took part in the game. Never had his hair fallen so low over his forehead, never had his chin disappeared so far into his neck-cloth! Every movement of his was so fraught with concentrated importance that, looking at him, one involuntarily thought, "What secret is this man concealing with such determination and firmness?"

But—*segredezza, segredezza.*

Through the whole of that day, he strove in various ways to pay the profoundest respect to Sanin; at dinner, when handing the courses round, he with an air of triumph and resolution served Sanin invariably before the ladies; during their game at *tresette*, he made a point of yielding the buying cards up to him, and dared not take the liberty of making him abate; and in an opportune moment, declared that it was his firm belief that the Russians were the most magnanimous, the bravest, and the most determined nation in all the world!

"O thou consummate old actor!" thought Sanin to himself.

Frau Roseith's unexpectedly gloomy frame of mind did not so much astonish Sanin as her daughter's behavior toward himself. It was not that she avoided him—quite the reverse; she was constantly seating herself somewhere near him, listening attentively to what he said, and looking at him; but she positively avoided every opportunity

of a *tit-tat-tat* with him, and as soon as he made any attempt to draw her into conversation, she would rise gently from her chair and quietly leave the room for a few moments. Then she would return again, and seat herself in some distant corner, and would remain motionless there—buried in thought and as if perplexed with wonder—deep wonder. Even Frau Lenore at last began to notice her unusual behavior, and asked her twice, what was the matter with her?

“Nothing,” answered Gemma; “you know that I am apt to be sad at times.”

“Oh! yes, that is indeed true,” assented her mother. Thus the long day went by—neither animatedly nor slowly—neither merrily nor sadly. Had Gemma been different in her manner—who knows whether Sanin could have withstood the temptation of making desperate love to her, or would not have given way to a feeling of sadness at the approaching separation which was possibly to part them forever. . . . But as he had not a single chance of speaking to Gemma alone, he solaced himself by resorting to the piano and touching some chords in the minor key, during the quarter of an hour before evening coffee.

Emile returned home late, and in trying to avoid the questions put to him about Herr Klüber, contradicted himself on several occasions. The time approached for Sanin to take leave.

He bade Gemma good-night, and while pressing her hand, strove to look into her face—but she half turned away and freed her fingers from his tight grasp.

XX.

The stars were already shining brightly when he got outside the door. Golden, red, blue, and white, they shot hither and thither across the heavens! They glittered and glimmered in myriads, mirrored and sporting in each other's rays. There was no moon, but even without it, every object rose vividly and distinctly in the half-dim and

shadowless twilight. Sanin walked to the end of the street—he had no wish to return home yet awhile, and an inclination seized him to take a stroll in the pure air. He turned back—and had barely reached the house where the Rosellis lived, when a window, looking out into the street, was suddenly thrown open—on the darkened sill of which (there was no light in the room) a female figure appeared—and he heard a voice calling to him,

“Monsieur Dimitri!”

He rushed up to the window and beheld . . . Gemma! She was resting with her arms on the windowsill, and leaned forward to him when he approached.

“Monsieur Dimitri,” she said in a subdued voice, “during the whole of this day I have been wishing to give you a small trifle; . . . but I had not the courage; and now seeing you again thus unexpectedly, I thought that fate must surely have ordained it. . . .”

Here she stopped abruptly; she was unable to continue: something startlingly strange occurred at that instant.

In the midst of the profound silence that had reigned over all things, and with a cloudless sky above, there had suddenly come such a heavy gust of wind that the earth itself seemed to tremble under foot, and the clear starlight quivered, and the very air, so motionless a minute before, seemed to rise and whirl like sand-clouds in a storm. This hot and almost stifling hurricane struck against the trees, the roof of the house and its walls, and rushed wildly down the street; it carried away Sanin’s hat and swept across Gemma’s dark curls. Sanin’s head was on a line with the windowsill; he clung to it impulsively—and Gemma, grasping his shoulders with both her hands, drew closer to him in fear. The noise and the distant peals lasted but a moment. . . . Like a flight of huge birds, this sudden squall had passed away. Deep silence reigned around once more.

Sanin looked, and bending over him, he beheld such a wondrous, startled, and excited face, such large, frightened, splendid eyes—such surpassing beauty, that his heart sank within him; he put his lips to the soft tress of hair that

had fallen over his breast, and could only murmur: "O Gemma!"

"What was it? Lightning?" she asked, opening wide her eyes, and still resting her fair hands on his shoulders.

"Gemma!" whispered Sanin again.

She shuddered, looked back into the room, and hurriedly drawing from out her bodice a faded rose, threw it to Sanin.

"I wished to give you this flower. . . ."

He recognized the rose which he had recaptured from the officer the day before. . . .

But the casement was already closed, and from behind the darkened window-pane, no object met his searching glance.

Sanin returned home without his hat, and thoroughly unconscious of his loss.

XXI.

He fell asleep only towards morning. And no wonder! Simultaneously with that sudden summer squall that had burst over them, he had become conscious of but one feeling—not of Gemma's beauty, or of his admiration for her—that he had long since been impressed with—but of a feeling of dawning love! And here was this absurd duel hanging over him! Sad presentiments took possession of him and harassed his mind. Allowing even that he were not killed. . . . What result could come from his love to this young girl, the promised bride of another? Allowing again, that this "other" was no dangerous rival, that Gemma herself would love him or had already given him all her love. . . . What then? Could it be possible? . . .

He walked up and down the room, sat down at the table, seized a sheet of paper, wrote two or three lines—their struck his pen through them. . . . He thought of Gemma's beauteous form leaning from out the dark window, with the starlight streaming down upon her, and fanned by the warm hurricane; he thought of her marble hands, like those of the Olympic goddesses—and felt their warm pressure on his shoulders. . . . Then he took up the rose she had

thrown him, and from out its half-withered petals there seemed to him to breathe a sweeter scent than was ever wafted from other roses. . . . And to think that he might be killed or maimed!

He never lay on his bed that night, but fell asleep, dressed, on the sofa.

He was aroused by some one shaking him by the shoulder. . . .

He opened his eyes, and saw Pantaleone standing before him.

"He sleeps, like Alexander the Great before the siege of Babylon!" exclaimed the old man.

"But what time is it?" asked Sanin.

"A quarter to seven; it is two hours' drive to Hanau, and we ought to be the first to get there. The Russians always anticipate their enemies! I have engaged the best carriage there is in Frankfort!"

Sanin rose and commenced washing himself.

"And where are the pistols?"

"The pistols will be brought by that *ferrofuckto Tedesco*; the doctor likewise."

As the day before, Pantaleone had put on a very courageous air; but when he got into the carriage with Sanin, when the coachman cracked his whip and the horses went off in a gallop, a perceptible change came over the countenance of the ex-singer and comrade of the Padua dragoons. He became agitated and faint-hearted, and like a badly constructed wall, he gave way all of a sudden.

"What are we about, my heavens! *Santissima Madonna!*" exclaimed he all at once, putting his hands up to his head. "What am I doing, old fool that I am, madman, *frenetico?*"

Sanin looked at him in astonishment, and burst out laughing; and taking the old man gently round the waist, reminded him of a French proverb, "*Le vin est tiré—il faut le boire.*"

"Yes, yes," answered Pantaleone; "you and I—we shall

drink this cup to the dregs. But still I am an idiot! I am an idiot! But a short time ago, all was peace and quiet and now; ta-ta-ta, trata-ta!"

"Just like the *tulli* in an orchestra," said Sanin, smiling.

"But you are not the one to blame."

"I know that it is not my fault! But still . . . it is such a lawless proceeding. *Diavolo! Diavolo!*" repeated Pantaleone, shaking his mop of hair, and sighing.

The carriage went rolling on to its destination.

The morning was lovely; the Frankfort streets, just beginning to show life, looked clean and bright; the windows of the houses were sparkling like steel in sunlight; and no sooner had the carriage passed the barrier, than the larks' loud songs were heard far up in the blue heavens above. Suddenly, at a turn of the road, a familiar figure made its appearance from behind a tall poplar, came forward a few steps, and stood still. Sanin was attracted by it—looked closer . . . Heavens! . . . It was Emile!

"Does he then know about this duel?" he said, turning to Pantaleone.

"Have I not told you that I am an imbecile?" wailed the poor old Italian, driven to despair. "That ill-fated boy gave me no peace all last night, and so at last this morning I disclosed the whole thing to him."

("That is his notion of *segredezza!*" thought Sanin.)

The carriage came on a line with Emile; Sanin bid the coachman stop the horses, and called out to the "ill-fated boy." With hesitating, tottering steps, Emile drew nigh, looking as white as he did on the day he was taken with the fainting fit.

"What are you doing here?" asked Sanin severely.
"Why are you not at home?"

"Let me . . . Oh! let me go with you," stammered Emile in a trembling voice, folding his hands entreatingly, while his teeth were trembling as in a fit of ague. "I shall not hinder you in any way; only take, take me!"

"If you have but the slightest degree of respect or consideration for me," continued Sanin, "you will instantly return home or to the shop, to Herr Klüber's, and will not say a single word to any one about what you know, and await my return."

"Your return," groaned Emile, his voice breaking down; "but if you are . . ."

"Emile!" cried Sanin, interrupting him, and pointing to the coachman, "collect yourself! Emile, please do go home! Listen to me, my friend! You tell me that you owe me. Well then, if you really do, you will turn back instantly."

He reached out his hand to him. Emile staggered forward, sobbed, pressed it to his lips, and, jumping off the road, ran back toward Frankfort across a field.

"There is another noble heart," muttered Pantaleone but Sanin turned so sternly on him that the old man shrank guiltily back into the carriage. His conscience troubled him sorely, and each moment the feeling of terror was taking stronger hold of him. Had he really consented to be second in a duel, and had he got the horses, and made all the arrangements, and quitted his peaceful dwelling at six in the morning? To add to his grievances, the poor old man was beginning to suffer intense pain in his legs.

Sanin thought it advisable to raise his sinking spirits —fell on the right vein, and found the exact words to produce the desired effect.

"Where is all your usual energy, honored Signor Cippatola? Where your ancient valor—*il antico valor?*"

"*Il antico valor,*" he repeated in a base voice, "*Non è ancora sperito—il antico valor!*"

He drew himself up, and instantly commenced talking of his career, of the opera, the great tenor Garcia; and, on arriving at Hanau, the old man had entirely resumed his usual vigor and spirits.

If one only reflects, what is there in this world more powerful, and yet weaker than words?

XXII.

The small wood in which the duel was to take place, lay about a quarter of a mile from Hanau. Sanin and Pantaleone were the first to arrive as the old man had anticipated; they ordered the carriage to stay outside the wood, and penetrated into the shadow of the dense trees. They were kept waiting by their adversaries for about an hour. In the mean while Sanin did not find the time irksome; he paced up and down along the narrow footpath, listened to the songs of the birds, watched the dragon-flies skim past him, and resolved, as almost every Russian does on similar occasions, to drive all thoughts away. Only once, in spite of this resolution, did he lose himself in short reverie: he had stumbled against a young lime tree, blown down in all probability during yesterday's squall. It was dying fast, and all its leaves were withering. "Is this a symbol of my own fate?" thought Sanin, gazing sadly on it; but the next moment he whistled gayly, and jumping over the fallen tree, renewed his walk along the footpath. Pantaleone, however, was in a very different mood from Sanin; he grumbled, abused all Germans, groaned, occasionally rubbing his back, and then his knees, and even yawned from very restlessness and agitation, giving his little drawn-up face at the time a most ludicrous expression. It was with the greatest difficulty that Sanin could repress his laughter at the old man's odd appearance.

The rolling of wheels was at last heard along the road.

"'Tis they!" exclaimed Pantaleone, pricking up his ears and drawing himself up with a nervous tremor, which he hastened to disguise by remarking on the chilliness of the morning air. The dew was still lying heavy on the grass and leaves of the trees, but a sultry heat had already penetrated the wood.

Both the officers soon made their appearance, accompanied by a thick-set little man, with a phlegmatic and not yet thoroughly awakened face—this was the military doctor. In one hand he carried an earthen-ware jug with

water—in case of necessity—and a bag containing surgical instruments and bandages was hanging over his left shoulder. He was evidently well up to this sort of excursion, which formed one of the chief sources of his income: each duel brought him in eight kreutzers—four from each of the contending parties. Mr. Von Richter carried the pistol-case, while Mr. Von Dönhof, with a dandified air, flourished a small cane in his hand.

"Pantaleone!" whispered Sanin to the old man, "if I am killed—you know all things are possible—take from out of my side-pocket a small bit of paper; in it you will find a flower, and give it to the Signorina Gemma. Do you hear? Will you promise to do so?"

The old man looked at him in a sorrowful way, and shook his head affirmatively. But heaven knows whether he had comprehended the nature of his promise.

The adversaries and seconds exchanged the customary bows; the doctor did not so much as move a muscle of his face—but sat down on the grass yawning, as much as to say, "These demonstrations of chivalrous politeness are not in my line." Mr. Von Richter proposed to Mr. "Chibadola" to choose the spot. Mr. "Chibadola" answered in a husky voice, (his courage fast forsaking him again,) "Sir, I leave the choice to you; I shall look on."

Then Mr. Von Richter at once commenced his operations, and his choice fell on a very pretty meadow in the wood itself, all studded with wild flowers; he measured the paces, marked the two extreme points with a couple of small sticks hurriedly cut and sharpened at the ends for the purpose, got the pistols out of the case, and sitting down on his tip-toes, began ramming the bullets down; in a word, he exerted himself so much and used such strength that he was occasionally obliged to wipe the perspiration off his heated face. While the preparations were going on, both adversaries stood somewhat back, looking not unlike two disgraced school-boys sulking with their tutors.

The decisive moment had arrived, and each took up his pistol.

Mr. Von Richter here interrupted them for a minute, by

observing to Pantaleone that as eldest second it was his duty, according to duel rules, before calling out the fatal "One! two! three!" to turn to the adversaries with the final advice and proposal of a reconciliation; that although this advice was never followed by any results, and was, generally speaking, but an empty formality, still, by performing this formality, Mr. Cippatola would ward off from himself a certain amount of responsibility; it was true that the direct duty of making a similar proposal belonged to the impartial spectator, but as such a one did not happen to be present, he, Mr. Von Richter, willingly gave up this privilege to his venerable colleague. Pantaleone, who had already hidden himself behind a bush, so that he should not see Sanin's adversary, had not at first understood a single word of Mr. Von Richter's speech, more especially as the whole had been uttered in a nasal twang; but he suddenly started, stepped nimbly forward, and striking his breast convulsively with his hands, cried out in a hoarse voice and in his own droll dialect: "*A la la la . . . che bestialità! Deux zeun 'ommes comme ça qué li battono—perchè? Che diavolo? Audent a casa!*"

"I do not consent to a reconciliation," exclaimed Sanin hurriedly.

"I likewise do not consent," repeated his adversary after him.

"Well then, call out: one, two, three!" said Von Richter, turning to the distracted Pantaleone.

The latter retired instantly behind his bush, and bending himself almost double, and closing his eyes and turning his head away, cried out from thence at the top of his voice, "*Una . . . die . . . e tre!"*

The first shot was fired by Sanin—and missed aim. His bullet had struck against a tree. Baron Dönhof fired immediately after—but premeditatedly into the air.

Then came a constrained silence. . . . Nobody moved from where they stood. Pantaleone gave a low groan.

"Shall we resume?" said Dönhof.

"Why did you fire into the air?" asked Sanin.

"That is not your business."

"And you intend to fire the second time into the air?"
asked Sanin again.

"May be: I do not know."

"Allow me, allow me, gentlemen," began Von Richter
"duelists are not permitted to talk to each other. That
is quite against all rules."

"I refuse to fire," muttered Sanin, throwing down his
pistol.

"And I also shall not continue this duel," exclaimed
Dönhof, likewise throwing his pistol to the ground. "Be-
sides, I am quite willing now to acknowledge that I was
in fault three days ago."

He moved uncomfortably where he stood, and held out
his hand in a hesitating manner. Sanin went up to him
quickly, and shook him warmly by the hand. Both gentle-
men looked at each other with a smile, and their faces
became suffused with color.

"Bravi, bravi!" burst out Pantaleone, and clapping his
hands, rushed from out of his bush like a madman, while
the doctor, who had seated himself on the trunk of a tree,
rose without loss of time, threw the water out of his jug,
and waddled lazily through the wood toward the road.

"Your honor is cleared and the duel is at an end!"
exclaimed Von Richter.

"Fuori!" croaked Pantaleone from old recollection.

Sanin was indeed delighted and relieved in his mind, when the formal bows had been exchanged and he once more took his seat in the carriage; nevertheless a consciousness akin to shame and vexation rankled within him when he felt that this duel had been nothing more nor less than a farce in which he had played his part. He recollected the phlegmatic little doctor, and how he, Sanin, had smiled, or rather drawn up his nose in derision at him, when he saw him leaving the wood almost arm in arm with Baron Dönhof. Then again, he brought to mind Pantaleone counting

put the four kreutzers to the doctor. There was something very unpleasant in these recollections.

Yes; he felt ashamed and annoyed at it all; although, looking at it from another point of view, what else could he have done under the circumstances?

Such insolent behavior could not be allowed to remain unresented, and was he to sink to Herr Klüber's level? Had he not stood in Gemma's defense and shielded her? His cause was a right one, most certainly, and still that feeling of shame at the whole proceeding would force itself upon him and torment him.

But Pantaleone was radiant with triumph and pride. No general, returning victorious from the field of battle, could have gazed around him with greater self-sufficiency and exultation than he did. Sanin's conduct during the duel had sent the old man into raptures. He exalted him to a hero, and would hear no admonition or even listen to any entreaties. He likened him to a monument of marble or bronze, and compared him with the statue of the commander in *Don Giovanni*; as far as had concerned himself, he owned to a feeling of great agitation at the time. "But then I am an artist," he added, "with a nervous, excitable temperament; while you—you are a child of the icy north and of the granite rocks."

Sanin was at a great loss how to quiet his nervous, excitable artist.

Very nearly on the same spot where they had met Emile before, this boy rushed out again from behind a tree, with a cry of joy on his lips, and, bounding toward them, ran at the carriage without waiting for the horses to be stopped, and in his hurry almost getting under the wheels, scrambled over the side of the carriage and clung to Sanin. "You are alive, you are not wounded!" he repeated joyfully. "Forgive me that I disobeyed you, and did not return to Frankfort. But I could not! I waited your return here. Tell me all about it. You—have killed him then?"

It was with the greatest difficulty that Sanin calmed the boy and disengaged himself from his close embrace.

With great eloquence, and beaming with pleasure, Pantaleone at once commenced giving him all the details of the duel, not omitting to mention the bronze monument and the statue of the commander! He even rose from his seat and, spreading wide his legs in order to keep his balance, folded his arms on his breast, and throwing a disdainful look over his shoulder, represented the living statue of the commander Sanin! Emile listened with awe and reverence to every word he uttered, only occasionally breaking the thread of his narrative by exclamations of wonder and joy, or else by suddenly starting from his seat to snatch a hasty embrace from his heroic friend.

The carriage rolled through the Frankfort streets, and drew up at last at Sanin's hotel. He was ascending the staircase with his two companions, when he caught sight of a female figure just emerging from out a dark corridor. Her face was covered with a veil. Stepping up to Sanin, she looked at him for a moment, and then ran down the staircase, into the street and disappeared, to the great astonishment of the waiter, who said that the lady had been waiting for the return of the foreign gentleman for upward of an hour. It was but a momentary glimpse, yet Sanin had recognized Gemma. He knew her by her eyes, in spite of the thick brown veil that she had thrown over her face.

"Did Fräulein Gemma know of this duel?" he inquired in a dissatisfied tone, speaking in German, and addressing himself to Emile and Pantaleone, who were following on his heels.

Emile grew red and confused.

"I was obliged to tell her," faltered Emile. "She had her suspicions, and I could not keep it from her. But it does not matter now in the least," he continued gayly; "it has all ended so happily, and she has seen you alive and unharmed."

Sanin turned away impatiently.

"What blabs you both are, to be sure!" he muttered, as

though annoyed ; and entering his room, threw himself into a chair.

"Pray do not be angry with me," said Emile beseechingly.

"Well, well, I shall not be angry with you." (Sanin was not really displeased with the boy ; he could hardly have wished for Gemma not to know of the duel.) "You have hugged me quite enough. Now go—I wish to remain alone. I shall go to bed, as I am feeling tired."

"Bright idea!" exclaimed Pantaleone. "You require rest ; you have earned it, noble Signor ! Come away, Emilio ! Walk gently, on your tip-toes, on your tip-toes —sh, sh, sh !"

When Sanin said he wanted to sleep, it was merely a subterfuge to rid himself of his friends ; but when they were gone and he was left alone, a feeling of weariness and fatigue stole over him. The night before he had hardly closed his eyes ; so throwing himself on his bed, he soon fell into a deep slumber.

XXIII.

He continued sleeping soundly for several hours ; and, while lying in a doze, he dreamt that he was again fighting a duel, and the adversary standing opposite to him was no other than Herr Klüber ; while, perched on a fir-tree close by, was a parrot, and this parrot was old Pantaleone, who kept incessantly repeating, "One, one, one ! one, one, one !"

"One . . . one . . . one !" that was at last too distinct to be a dream. He opened his eyes, raised his head from his pillow ; surely some one had been knocking at his door.

"Come in !" he cried.

The waiter entered, and announced that a lady was outside anxious to see him.

"Gemma !" was the first thought that struck him ; but the lady proved to be her mother, Frau Lenore.

No sooner had the latter entered the room than, dropping into a chair, she burst into a flood of tears.

"My dear, good Madame Roselli, what is the matter with you?" he exclaimed, seating himself next to her, and taking her gently by the hand. "Has any thing happened? Pray calm yourself."

"O Herr Dimitri! I am very unhappy."

"You unhappy?"

"Oh! very. And could I ever have expected this? It has come upon me like a sudden thunderbolt from heaven!"

The old lady was breathing with difficulty.

"But what is it? Explain yourself. Will you have a glass of water?"

"Oh! no, thank you." Frau Lenore put her handkerchief up to her eyes, and commenced sobbing again.

"I know it all, all!"

"What do you mean by *all*?"

"All that happened yesterday! And I know the cause of it all! You have acted like an honorable man; but what an unfortunate string of events! I was right in disapproving of that trip to Soden. You see I was right!" (Frau Lenore had never expressed such disapproval, but she now labored under the delusion that she had felt a presentiment of this "*all*" even then.) "I come to you now as to an honorable man, as to a friend, although I have only known you for five days. But I am a widow, an unprotected widow. My daughter . . ."

Here the old lady sobbed afresh. Sanin was at a loss what to think. "Your daughter!" he repeated.

"My daughter Gemma," said Frau Lenore, with a groan from beneath her tear-stained handkerchief, "informed me yesterday that she had no wish to marry Herr Klüber, and desired I would refuse him!"

Sanin gave an involuntary start; he had not expected such an announcement.

"I do not mean to say," continued Frau Lenore, "that it is a disgrace, or that such things are not of common occurrence in the world; but it is ruination to us, Herr Dimitri!" Here she nervously twisted her handkerchief into the tiniest ball, as though she wished she could have centred all her sorrow in it. "Our income is not suffi-

cient to keep us, Herr Dimitri, and Herr Klüber is very rich, and will be still richer in time. And why should she refuse him? Because he was not energetic in her defense? Allowing even that he should have behaved differently, he, you know, is a civilian, and has not received a university education; and, as a solid, matter-of-fact tradesman, he had only to treat the thoughtless pranks of the young officer with the greatest contempt. But, after all, what great offence was it, Herr Dimitri?"

"Pardon me, Frau Lenore, but you seem inclined to condemn me."

"No, I do not condemn you in the least. You, like all Russians, and as a military man . . ."

"You are mistaken. I am not a military man."

"You are a foreigner, a traveler, and I feel the deepest gratitude to you," continued Frau Lenore, unmindful of Sanin. She had become breathless, moved her hands about restlessly, and, unrolling her handkerchief, blew her nose. By the way in which she expressed her grievances, one could easily see she had not been born under a northern sky.

"And how could Herr Klüber attend to his business, if he is expected to fight duels with his customers? Where is the consistency of it? And now I am told to refuse him! But how are we to live? Our business is failing. Other pastry-cooks have taken to making the sweets that were only to be had in our shop before. Consider the matter well yourself; even your duel will be the talk of the whole town. . . . Such things can never be concealed. Then there is this engagement suddenly broken off! Why it will be the cause for all sorts of scandal! Gemma is a very good girl; she is very fond of me; but she is an obstinate republican who braves all public opinion. You are the only one who could have any influence over her."

Sanin looked more astonished than ever. "I, Frau Lenore?"

"Yes, you, and you alone. And it is with this purpose that I come here. I could think of no other plan. You are such a learned, good man! And besides, you were the

one who took up her cause. She will confide in you and trust you. She is bound to trust you, since you risked your very life for her! You will prove to her the rashness of her conduct. I have done all in my power, and can do no more. Tell her that she blights her own prospects and ours. You saved my son; save also my daughter. God in his merciful goodness must have sent you to us. I am willing to fall down on my knees before you to implore you. . . ." And Frau Lenore half raised herself from her chair, as though in the act of throwing herself at his feet. He seized hold of her.

"Frau Lenore! For God's sake, calm yourself!"

She caught hold of his hand, and grasping it tightly, said, "You promise?"

"Frau Lenore, only consider well what right have I— . . ."

"You promise? Surely you have no wish to see me die before you?"

Sanin knew not what to say. He had never before witnessed the passionate outburst of grief of an Italian.

"I shall do all that you desire!" he exclaimed at last. "I shall speak to Fräulein Gemma."

Frau Lenore could not restrain a cry of joy.

"Only I really can not see what the result will be."

"Oh! do not draw back, do not refuse!" entreated Frau Lenore. "You have given your promise! The result must be satisfactory. At all events, I have done my utmost. She would never have listened to what I would have said."

"Has she decidedly expressed her unwillingness to marry Herr Klüber?" asked Sanin after a pause.

"As good as sworn it! She is the exact counterpart of her father, Giovan' Battista! Unmanageable!"

"She unmanageable?" repeated Sanin.

"Yes . . . yes . . . but she is an angel all the same. She will obey you. Only come, come quickly! O my dear Russian friend!" and Frau Lenore sprang from her chair and threw her arms round Sanin, who sat oppo-

mite to her. "Accept a mother's blessing . . . and give me a glass of water!"

Sanin brought Madame Roselli a glass of water, gave her his word of honor that he would come without delay, escorted her down the stairs, and, returning to his room, lifted his hands to his head, and opened his eyes wide with amazement.

"Now, indeed," thought he, "have I got into the real whirl of life! and such a whirl that my head grows dizzy from it!" He did not care to analyze his feelings to discover what was stirring within him; sufficient to him that his mind was in a state of wild confusion. "Well, this has been a day!" he muttered. "Unmanageable did her mother say? And I am to offer her my advice—Gemma—my advice! And what shall I advise her?"

Sanin's head was certainly swimming round; but, in the midst of all this tumult of various sensations, impressions, and unuttered thoughts, Gemma's image ever rose before him; that image which was indelibly stamped on his memory when, in that warm summer evening, she appeared at the dark casement, in the soft light of the stars!

XXIV.

Sanin drew near to the Roselli house with faltering steps. His heart was beating fast, and he could hear it throbbing violently against his breast. What should he say to Gemma? how broach the subject! He entered the house by the back way, and met Frau Lenore in the small ante-room. The old lady evinced both pleasure and fear at his appearance.

"I have been waiting for you impatiently," she said in a whisper, and pressing his hand in both her own. "Go into the garden; you will find her there. Remember that I place all my hope in you!"

Sanin walked slowly into the garden. Gemma was sitting on a bench, sorting cherries out of a large basket, and putting them in a plate. The sun was already low—it was seven in the evening—and its wide slanting beams cast a rich purple light over Madame Roselli's little garden.

The trees were exchanging soft whispers with one another the belated bees, flying from flower to flower, were humming half audibly ; while, somewhere unseen, a turtle-dove was cooing monotonously and unceasingly. Her face was shaded by the same round hat she had worn the day they went to Soden. She lifted up her eyes shyly at Sanin, and continued sorting her cherries.

Sanin approached her hesitatingly, each step slower than the last ; and all that he could find to say when he had reached her side was, " Why are you sorting cherries ? "

" The ripest," she answered, after a moment's pause, " will be used for preserving ; the rest are put into tarts."

She bent her head low down, and her right hand, which held a cluster of cherries, paused midway between the basket and the plate.

" May I sit next to you ?" asked Sanin.

" You may," and she moved aside to make room for him. " Now, how shall I begin ? " thought he. But Gemma drew him out of the difficulty.

" You have been fighting a duel," she said quickly, turning her lovely face to him, and blushing with confusion, while deep gratitude beamed from out her eyes " And yet you are so calm ! I suppose you do not know what it is to fear danger ? "

" Believe me, I exposed myself to no danger whatever We came to a very satisfactory understanding."

Gemma passed her fingers twice before her eyes—another Italian gesture. " No, no ! do not tell me that ! You can not deceive me ! Pantaleone has disclosed every thing ! "

" What a man to place your faith in ! Did he compare me with the statue of a certain commander ? "

" He may be droll in his mode of expressing himself, but his feelings at your conduct to-day must not be ridiculed. And you went through all this for me, for me. I can never forget it ! "

" I assure you, Fräulein Gemma"

" I shall never forget it, never !" she repeated with emphasis, turning her face away from him.

He gazed at her delicate clear profile, and he thought

he had never seen such perfect loveliness before, or experienced such a moment of bliss in his whole life.

"And my promise!" he suddenly recollectcd.

"Fräulein Gemma!" he commenced falteringly.

"What?"

She kept her face persistently turned from him, and went on sorting the cherries, lifting them carefully by their stems, and as carefully plucking the leaves off. But what a world of kindly faith rang through that one little word, "What?"

"Your mother has not spoken to you about . . . ?"

"About what?"

"About me."

Gemma suddenly threw back the cherries she had taken from the basket.

"She has been speaking to you?" she asked in her turn.

"Yes."

"What was it she spoke to you about?"

"She told me that you . . . that you had altered your previous intentions."

Gemma bent her head still lower over her basket. Her whole face was now hidden under her wide hat, and her delicate slender neck, like the stem of some tall flower, was alone visible.

"What intentions?"

"Your intentions . . . with regard to . . . your future prospects in life."

"That is to say . . . you mean . . . concerning Herr Klüber?"

"Yes."

"My mother has told you that I have refused to be the wife of Herr Klüber?"

"Yes."

Gemma moved away. The basket tipped over, fell, and a few cherries rolled out on the walk. One minute passed in silence . . . and another.

"Why did she tell you this?" he heard her say. Her face was still hidden from him, but he noticed the troubled heaving of her breast.

"Why? Your mother thought that as we had become such great friends in so short a space of time, and as you had shown a certain amount of faith in me, you would probably allow yourself to be influenced by my advice."

Gemma dropped her hands gently, and her fingers played with the folds of her dress.

"And what is your advice, Monsieur Dimitri?" she said inquiringly, after a few minutes' pause. Sanin could see that her fingers were trembling nervously, and that she was merely playing with her dress to conceal her emotion from him. He laid his hand tenderly over those white, tremulous fingers.

"Gemma," he murmured pleadingly, "why do you turn away from me?"

She instantly threw back her hat over her shoulders, and cast her trusting, grateful eyes on him. She waited for him to say another word. But the sight of her face had dazzled and blinded him. The warm blaze of the evening sun fell full upon it, and the expression of that sweet face was clearer and brighter than the blaze that illumined it.

"I shall obey you, Monsieur Dimitri," she said, smiling and raising her dark eyebrows; "but what is your advice?"

"My advice," he repeated. "You see, your mother thinks, that to refuse Herr Klüber simply because he did not resent the insult offered you . . ."

"Only for that reason?" said Gemma, bending down to lift the basket, and placing it again beside her on the bench.

"That . . . in fact . . . to refuse him would be an act of imprudence on your part; that it is such an important step, a step which should not be taken without mature consideration; finally, the very state of your affairs alone enforces certain duties on each member of your family."

"This is my mother's opinion," interrupted Gemma; "these are her words, that I feel certain of. Tell me now what your opinion is."

"Mine?" He was silent. Something seemed to rise to his throat, to choke him and catch his breath.

"I also think," he said, with difficulty.

Gemma drew herself up. "You also think?"

"Yes . . . that is to say" Sanin was utterly unable to continue.

"Very well. If you, as a sincere friend, advise me to alter my decision . . . I mean to carry out my former intentions, I shall take your advice in consideration." She was unconsciously putting the sorted cherries from the plate back into the basket. "My mother trusts that I will obey you . . . Well, very likely I shall."

"But allow me, Fräulein Gemma, to ask you what the reasons were that urged you . . ."

"I shall obey you," repeated Gemma, heeding not what he said, and turning deadly pale. "You have done so much for me that I am bound to fulfill your wishes. I shall tell my mother . . . and think over what you have said. But see, here she comes."

Frau Lenore had appeared on the threshold of the door which led out to the garden. Her impatience had got the better of her, and she could bear the suspense no longer. According to her calculations, she thought Sanin could have finished his conversation with Gemma long ere this, although the *tete-à-tête* had not lasted more than a quarter of an hour.

"No, no, no, for God's sake, tell her nothing yet," said Sanin hurriedly, and with a frightened look. "Wait a while . . . I shall tell you when I shall write to you . . . and until then decide on nothing. Only wait!"

He pressed Gemma's hand, and rose from the seat; and to the great astonishment of Frau Lenore, hurried past the latter, merely lifting his hat to her, and muttering something very indistinctly, left the garden.

The old lady hastened to her daughter.

"Tell me, Gemma . . ."

Gemma threw her arms round her mother's neck. . . . "Dearest mother, can you wait patiently a while, just a little while, only until to-morrow? Tell me, can

you? And you will not say a word more until to-morrow?"

Here Gemma burst into a sudden flood of happy tears, and the expression of her face, which was far from being sorrowful, filled the old lady with still greater astonishment.

"What is the matter with you?" she inquired. "You never cry. What means this sudden outburst?"

"Nothing, mother, nothing! Only wait. We must both wait. Do not question me until to-morrow, but let us sort the cherries before the sun goes down."

"But you will act like a sensible girl?"

"Oh, I am very sensible!" she said, shaking her head demurely. Then she began tying bunches of cherries together, holding them high above her blushing face. She did not wipe away her tears: they dried of their own free will.

XXV.

Sanin almost ran all the way to the hotel. He felt that there, in the solitude of his own room, he could think more calmly over all that had happened, bring each feeling to account, and discover the real source of his feverish excitement. And truly, no sooner had he entered his room and seated himself at his writing table, than, leaning his elbows on it and resting his face on his hands, he cried out in a tone of sorrow and despair: "I love her, love her madly!" and a bright glow, like that which comes over a dying ember when the ashes are suddenly blown off its surface, kindled within him.

Another moment, and he could no longer comprehend how he could have sat next her, next Gemma! and spoken with her, without feeling that he adored the very hem of her dress, and was willing, as all young lovers express themselves, "to die at her feet." Their last meeting in the garden had decided it all. Now, when he thought of her, his imagination pictured her no longer beneath the mellow light of the stars with the wild wind fanning her curls; he saw her seated on that garden-bench, her hat thrown back, looking at him so trustfully and kindly. . . . And the recollection of that gaze sent a tremor of passionate love

through his veins. He thought of the rose he had kept in his pocket for the last three days, and taking it out, he pressed it to his lips fervently. He could argue with himself no more, and would take nothing into consideration he had cast all the past aside, and had leaped into the present with one sudden bound ; he had left the dismal shore of his lonely bachelor life, and had rushed headlong into that happy, swift, and mighty stream, without reflecting whither it would carry him, without caring to know if the rapid current would dash him eventually against the rocks ! This, indeed, was not the calm streamlet in the Uhland romance, which had rocked him gently but a short while ago. . . . These were powerful ungovernable waves ! They rolled along in fearful grandeur, bearing him along with them on their wild and dangerous course.

He seized a sheet of paper, and, with almost one dash of the pen, wrote the following lines :

“ DEAR GEMMA : You know the advice that I took upon myself to offer you ; you know what your mother’s wishes are and what she begged me to do ; but what you do not know, and what I feel it my duty to tell you now, is this, that I love you, love you with all the passion of first love. Words can not express the depth and force of the love you have awakened within me ! When your mother came to me, begging me to intercede, the spark you had kindled was only smouldering, otherwise I should certainly have refused to fulfill her wishes. . . . The confession I now make is the confession of an honorable man. You must understand me thoroughly, no suspicions must exist between us. You see, I am unable to give you any advice . . . I love you—this is my sole thought, the sole feeling of my heart ! ” Dm. SANIN.”

Having folded and sealed this letter, Sanin was on the point of ringing for the waiter to tell him to carry it to its destination. . . . No ! that would not do ! Should he take it to Emile ? But to go to the shop where Emile was, and to search for him amongst the other clerks, would also be exceedingly unpleasant. Besides, it was already dark, and Emile had probably left by this time. Reflecting

in this manner, Sanin nevertheless put on his hat and went out; he had turned the first corner and was going round the next, when, to his unspeakable joy, he beheld Emile in front of him. With a small bag under his arm and a roll of paper in his hand, the young enthusiast was speeding homeward.

"There is truth in the saying that lovers are blest with lucky stars!" thought Sanin, calling out at the same time to Emile.

The latter turned, and recognizing him, rushed back toward him.

Sanin allowed him no time to express his great joy at this unexpected meeting; but instantly intrusted the letter to his care, and explained for whom it was and the manner in which he was to deliver it. Emile stood listening with attention.

"No one must see it?" he asked, with a significant and mysterious expression in his face which said, "I quite understand the drift of it!"

"Yes, my young friend," answered Sanin, getting rather confused, and stroking Emile on the cheek. . . . "And in case there should be an answer, you will bring it to me, will you not? I shall be at home."

"Oh! you may be certain, I shall bring it!" whispered Emile gayly, and ran off, turning round to give him a nod, as he scampered away.

Sanin returned home, and without lighting the candles, threw himself on his sofa, rested his head on his hands, and abandoned himself to the multitudinous sensations of an avowed love—sensations which we need not describe. Those who have experienced them know well their sweet-ness and their pangs; those who have not passed through that experience will not be able to comprehend our meaning.

The door was opened, and the next minute Emile made his appearance.

"I have brought it," he said in a whisper; "here is your answer!" and he held a small folded piece of paper over his head.

Sanin started from the sofa and snatched it from his hand. To conceal his feelings and feign indifference, ever before her brother, was beyond his power of self-control.

He rushed to the window, and by the light of a lamp outside, read the following lines :

"I beg and beseech you not to come to us, not to show yourself all day to-morrow. This is of the greatest importance to me. To-morrow will decide every thing. I know you will not refuse my small petition, because . . .

"GEMMA."

Sanin read the note twice over. How neat and pretty was that handwriting ! He turned to Emile who, anxious to display his discretion, was standing with his face to the wall, digging his nails into the plaster, and called him by his name.

Emile instantly ran up to him. "What is it ?"

"You will tell somebody—you know whom I mean—you will tell her that her wishes shall be strictly obeyed." (Emile compressed his lips and nodded with an air of importance.) "And are you going to be about to-morrow ?"

"I ? I shall do whatever you like."

"If you can manage it, come to me to-morrow morning early, and we shall go out for a whole day's stroll into the country . . . would you like that ?"

"What in the world should I enjoy more than taking a long walk with you ? Oh ! most certainly, I shall come."

"But if you can not get away ?"

"But I shall !"

"Mind—you must not tell them at home that you are out with me for the whole day."

"Why should I ? I shall not let them know where I am going."

With these words, Emile gave his friend a close hug, and ran off.

Sanin paced up and down his room for a long while that night, and did not go to bed until late. He lost himself in a maze of happy thoughts, drawn from the smiling future, so full of promise ! He was glad he had asked Emile to spend the day with him ; he was so like his sister

"He will remind me of her," he said musingly to himself. But what the puzzled over was this: how he could have felt differently yesterday from to-day? It seemed to him as though he had always loved Gemma with a love as intense as that he now felt for her.

XXVI.

The following day, at 8 o'clock in the morning, Emile, accompanied by Tartaglia, went to the Hotel. He had deceived them at home by saying that he was going first for a short walk with Sanin, and would return to his duties after breakfast. While the latter was dressing, Emile ventured, though very hesitatingly, to direct the conversation to Gemma and her broken engagement with Herr Klüber; but Sanin rebuked him with stern silence, and Emile, to prove that he quite understood why the subject should not be treated so lightly, returned to it no more.

Having first refreshed themselves with a cup of coffee, they set out on foot to Hausen, a small village no great distance from Frankfort, and surrounded by woods. From this place the Taunus hills are seen distinctly. The weather was lovely; the sun shone brightly, without being too hot; a fresh breeze was stirring the green leaves, and shadows of the clouds above were sailing swiftly along the earth. Sanin and Emile soon left the town far behind them, and were stepping out briskly and gayly along the smooth road. They struck off into the wood, and roamed about in it for some time; then they breakfasted at a small inn in the village; after breakfast, they climbed the hills, admired the different views, flung stones from the summits and clapped their hands in glee, as those stones went rolling down, skipping like rabbits, until some unseen individual from below rebuked them in a loud ringing voice; they stretched themselves down to rest on the soft, brown moss; they quenched their thirst with beer at another inn; they raced, and betted on each other as to who could run the swiftest. They discovered an echo, and called to it, and sang; they wrestled, cut down branches of trees, decorated their hats with ferns—and even danced. Tarta-

glia joined them in all their sports : true, he could not throw stones, but he rolled after them like a ball, howled when Sanin and Emile sang—and even drank beer, although with apparent distaste for that beverage : he had been initiated in this art by a student to whom he had belonged, once upon a time. They also had long discussions together. Sanin, as eldest, and more sensible of the two, commenced a long discourse on fatalism and man's vocation, but the conversation soon took a less serious turn. Emile wished his great friend and patron to tell him more about Russia ; how duels were fought there ; whether the women were pretty, and if it was possible to learn Russian quickly ; and what his feelings were when the officer aimed at him. Sanin, when his turn arrived, cross-questioned Emile about his father, his mother, and their family matters—trying, the whole time, to avoid Gemma's name, and thinking of her alone. And yet, properly speaking, it was not even of her that he thought, but of the morrow, that morrow enveloped in mystery, sweet uncertainty, and shadowy brightness. It seemed as though a vail, a slight, thin vail, was fluttering across his mental vision, while behind that vail he felt the presence of a sacred image, with a bright smile on its lips, and with eyes cast down. And this image was not that of Gemma, but of happiness itself ! And now at last his hour is at hand ; the vail is drawn aside, the lips of that image open, the eyelids are raised—he beholds his divinity, and light and happiness and endless joy shine forth upon him ! He thinks of the morrow, and his heart sickens with suspense and longing and ever-returning hope !

But these both bright and sorrowful musings do not in any way interfere with his pleasure. They do not prevent him from enjoying a good dinner with Emile at a third inn, and from playing at leapfrog after the meal is over. This game took place in an open meadow. . . . But who can picture Sanin's astonishment and confusion, when, attracted by Tartaglia's fierce bark, and in the act of flying over Emile's back, he all of a sudden sees in front of him, standing on the edge of the meadow, two officers, whom

he instantly recognizes as Von Dönhoff and Von Rich ter!

Both these gentlemen raise their eyeglasses and stare at him. Sanin falls on his feet, turns his back on them, puts on his coat hurriedly, says a word to Emile, who also puts on his jacket, and both walk away in an opposite direction.

It was late when they returned to Frankfort.

"I shall be sure to get a scolding," said Emile to Sanin, bidding him good-by; "but what does it matter? For that, I have had a splendid day!"

Returning to his hotel, Sanin found a note from Gemma. She wrote to appoint a meeting with him on the following day, at seven in the morning, in one of the public gardens which encircle Frankfort.

How his heart beat with joy! How happy he was that he had thus blindly obeyed her! And, heavens, what bliss was there not in store for him on the approaching morrow! Long did his eyes rest on her note. The elegant flourish to the little G at the end of the sheet, reminded him so forcibly of her pretty fingers and of her hand . . . He recollect ed that his lips had never yet been pressed to that hand . . . "Italians," thought he, "despite public opinion, are bashful and reserved, . . . and Gemma is most assuredly so! A queen—a divinity—like marble pure and white."

There was one happy man that night at Frankfort. . . . He slept; but he could have said of himself, with the words of the poet,

"I sleep, but my heart waketh."

And truly his heart beat as lightly as the fluttering of the wings of a butterfly, struggling from out the heavy dew of a flower, and bathed in the summer sun.

XXVII.

He woke at five, by six he was ready dressed, and by half past six he was in the public garden, pacing in front of the small summer-house that Gemma had mentioned in her note.

It was a gray, warm morning. At times it threatened to rain, and tiny drops, as big as beads, fell on Sanin's coat; but they soon disappeared. The air was as still as if there never had been any wind; while in the distance rose a white vapor, and the atmosphere was heavy with the fragrance of mignonette and white acacia.

The shops were still closed, but foot-passengers were astir in the streets, and a solitary carriage was heard to roll along occasionally; but in the gardens there was no one walking. A gardener was lazily sweeping the paths, and a wretched old woman, in a black cloth cloak, was hurrying across an avenue. Sanin did not for a moment suppose this miserable object to be Gemma—and yet the sight of it had made him start, and his eyes had followed that black retreating speck into space.

Seven! chimed the clock in the tower. Sanin stood still. Could it be possible that she was not coming? A chilly tremor ran through him. But a moment more, and he heard light footsteps behind him, and the soft rustle of a woman's dress. He turned: it was Gemma!

She was dressed in a gray mantilla, and a small dark bonnet. When she caught sight of Sanin, she turned her head aside, and coming up to him, never uttered a word, but hurried on.

"Gemma!" he called half audibly.

She nodded to him, and continued walking on. He followed her.

She went past the summer-house, turned to the right, skirted a small fountain in which a sparrow was taking its morning bath, and entering a small shrubbery of lilacs, dropped down on a bench.

Sanin seated himself next to her.

A moment passed, without either of them saying a word; she did not even look at him, and he dared not lift his eyes to her face, but only gazed at her folded hands which held a small parasol. What could they talk about? What could they say to equal the joy they both felt at being in each other's presence at that early hour, and so near to each other?

"You—are not angry with me?" asked Sanin, at last.

He could not have thought of any thing more silly to say than that . . . he knew it . . . At all events it had broken the silence.

"I?" she answered. "Why should I be angry? No."

"And you believe in me?" he continued.

"Believe in what you wrote?"

"Yes."

Gemma inclined her head and was silent. Her parasol slipped from out her hands. She caught it quickly before it fell to the ground.

"Oh! believe in me, believe in all that I wrote to you," exclaimed Sanin, with fervor, his diffidence suddenly vanishing. "If there is any truth on earth, any sacred and undoubted truth—it is this, that I love you, love you passionately, Gemma!"

She gave him a hurried searching glance, and again almost dropped her parasol.

"Believe in me, believe in me," he repeated beseechingly, stretching out his hands toward her; but not daring to touch her. "What would you wish me to do . . . to assure you of my sincerity?"

Again she turned to look at him.

"Tell me, Monsieur Dimitri," she at last said: "three days ago when you came to offer me your advice—you did not know then—you did not feel . . ."

"I felt," interrupted Sanin, "but did not know. I have loved you since the very first moment I saw you; but I did not know how precious you were to me, until now! Besides, they told me you were plighted to another . . . And as to your mother's wishes . . . in the first place: how could I refuse to oblige her? secondly . . . I delivered them to you in a manner that might have led you to suppose . . ."

Heavy steps were heard close by, and a stout gentleman, with a traveling bag thrown across his shoulder, and apparently a foreigner, suddenly emerged from the bushes, and, with the usual unceremoniousness of a traveler, scrutinized

the couple seated on the bench, gave a loud cough, and passed on further.

"Your mother," continued Sanin, as the retreating footsteps died away, "told me that your refusal of Herr Klüber would give rise to much scandal," (Gemma frowned slightly at these words;) "that my own behavior had partly been the cause of these unpleasant rumors, and that consequently I was—in a way—bound to do my utmost in persuading you not to break off your engagement with your affianced husband, Herr Klüber."

"Monsieur Dimitri," said Gemma, passing her hand over her hair on the side next to Sanin, "do not call him my affianced husband. I shall never be his wife. I have refused him."

"You have refused him? When?

"Yesterday."

"Refused him yourself?"

"Yes. At our own house. He came to us."

"Gemma! Then you love me?"

She turned to him.

"Otherwise—should I have come here?" she whispered, and her hands dropped on the bench.

Sanin took up those powerless hands, and with their palms upturned, pressed them to his lips. Now was that veil lifted. This was his happiness, this his radiant image! He raised his head and looked at Gemma, long and fixedly. She also looked up at him—but shyly from beneath her eyebrows; and her half-closed eyes gleamed with bright, blissful tears! There was no smile on her face, but it was radiant with happiness.

He longed to take and clasp her to his breast, but she drew away from him, and shook her head in rebuke. "Wait," those joyful eyes seemed to say to him.

"O Gemma!" exclaimed Sanin, "could I ever have thought that you would love me!"

"I myself never dreamt of it," said Gemma, in a low voice.

"Could I ever have thought," continued Sanin, "when

arriving here at Frankfort, where I intended staying only a few hours, that I should find my life's happiness here!"

"Your life's happiness! Is that truly so?" said Gemma, with eager inquiry.

"My life's, my everlasting happiness!" he exclaimed, in a fresh outburst of feeling.

The gardener's spade was heard scraping the ground within a few paces from where they sat.

"Come home," whispered Gemma; "let us go together, will you?"

If she had said at that moment: "Throw yourself into the sea, will you?" he would have rushed headlong, before she could have had time ever to utter the last two words.

They left the garden together and returned home, not by the public streets, but choosing the by-ways and lanes.

XXVIII.

Sanin walked by Gemma's side, never taking his eyes off her, never ceasing to smile, while she seemed at times to hurry along, at times to linger back. In truth, both of them—he as pale as death, she flushed with excitement—looked as though they were wandering in a mist. All that had transpired a few short minutes ago, that surrender of the soul to another, had been so forcible, so novel, and so strangely sweet; every thing in their life had shifted and changed so suddenly that they were unable to collect their thoughts, and could only liken this storm of events that had overtaken and surrounded them, to that evening gale which had almost driven them into each other's arms. As Sanin followed by her side, he felt that he even saw her now in a different light: he noticed several peculiarities in her walk, and in her movements, and heavens! how unutterably dear and pretty were they to him! And she felt conscious of his thoughts.

They had never loved before; thus all the magic of first love was casting its subtle power over them. First love is like a revolution—the uniform, regular line of life is rent asunder and destroyed in one moment; youth stands on the barricade, its bright banner waving aloft, and whatever

fate awaits it, death or new life, it greets each with a radiant welcome.

"That looks very like our old friend!" said Sanin, pointing with his finger to a muffled figure, skirting the road in haste, as though anxious to escape recognition. In the midst of his great happiness, he felt the necessity of talking to Gemma, not of love—that was settled, and sacred—but on indifferent subjects.

"Yes, that is Pantaleone," she answered gayly; "very likely he followed my footsteps when I left home; even yesterday he would not lose me out of his sight. He guesses all!"

"He guesses all!" repeated Sanin in rapturous delight. What could Gemma have found to say that would not have sent him into ecstasies?

Then he asked her to relate to him all that had happened the day before. And she commenced telling him, hurriedly, confusedly, smiling, drawing short sighs and exchanging short, bright glances with him. She told him how, after the conversation of the other day, her mother had tried to bring her, at last, to a final decision; how she had escaped Frau Lenore's persecution by promising to give a decisive answer in the course of a day; how she had pleaded for that short reprieve, and how trying it had been to her; how unexpectedly Herr Klüber had made his appearance, more starched and affected than ever; "how he announced his displeasure at the boyish, unpardonable, and, to him, deeply offensive (that was the term he used) sally of the Russian stranger—he meant your duel—and demanded that you should be no longer admitted into the house. 'Because,' he added," and here Gemma mimicked his voice and manner, "'it casts a slur on me, as though I myself could not have protected my affianced wife if I had thought it requisite to do so! All Frankfort will know to-morrow that the stranger has fought with the officer in my affianced wife's cause, and how does that look? It is a slur on my honor!' Mamma agreed with him, just fancy! but I at once informed him that he gave himself but useless anxiety about his honor and his own person; that

there was no necessity whatever for him to take offense at the reports concerning his affianced wife, because I was no longer engaged to him and never should be his wife! To tell you frankly, it had been my intention to speak first to you, before giving him my final refusal; but he came, and I could not help saying what I did. Mamma even screamed with fright, and I went out into the other room and brought him his ring. You never noticed that I took off that ring two days ago, and returned it to him. He was very much offended; but being an exceedingly conceited, boastful man, he did not say much more about it, and went away. Of course, I had a great deal to hear from Mamma, and it was painful for me to see the anger I had caused, and I thought that I had been too rash; but I had your note—and without it I knew—”

“That I loved you,” said Sanin.

“Yes, that you loved me.”

Thus spoke Gemma, embarrassed and smiling, and dropping her voice and becoming silent, whenever any one came toward them or passed them. And Sanin listened to her in raptures, delighting as much in the very sound of her voice, as the day before he had admired her handwriting.

“Mamma is very angry,” began Gemma again, and her words flowed in quick succession; “she can not at all imagine that Herr Klüber may have become distasteful to me; that I was marrying not for love, but simply on the strength of her entreaties. She has her suspicions about you; that is to say, to speak plainly, she is convinced that I am in love with you, and it grieves her all the more to think that only three days ago those suspicions never entered her head, and that she charged you to use your persuasive powers over me. And what a strange charge it was, was it not? And now she calls you a deep, sly man; she says that you betrayed her confidence, and she warns me that you will deceive me also.”

“But, Gemma,” exclaimed Sanin, “did you not tell her . . . ?”

"I told her nothing! What right had I before consulting you?"

"Gemma, I hope that now, at all events, you will confess every thing to her; you will take me to her; I wish to prove to your mother that I am no deceiver!"

Sanin's breast was heaving with a sudden storm of noble and fervent feelings.

She looked at him in wonder. "You really wish to go now to Mamma with me? To Mamma, who persists in assuring me, that whatever exists between us is an impossibility, and can never lead to any thing?" There was one word that Gemma had not the courage to say. It scorched her lips; but Sanin was all the more willing to utter it.

"To marry you, Gemma, to be your husband, I know of no greater bliss!"

To his love, to his magnanimity, to his determination, he already knew no bounds.

Hearing these words, Gemma, who had stood still a moment, quickened her pace. It seemed as though she wished to escape from this unexpected weight of happiness.

But all of a sudden her feet gave way. Turning the lane, and within a few steps of her, she beheld Herr Klüber, in a new hat, new coat, upright as an arrow, and with his hair as curly as a poodle's. He noticed Gemma and Sanin, and gave a kind of inward snort, and throwing himself back, advanced towards them with a jaunty, dashing air. Sanin was rather startled the first moment at this sudden apparition; but looking into Klüber's face, to which the owner had striven to give an expression of mingled contempt, surprise, and pity, looking into that meaningless pink and white face, he felt a sudden rise of indignation, and stepped past him.

Gemma caught hold of Sanin's hand, and with quiet determination holding out her own, looked her former suitor full in the face. Klüber screwed up his eyes, writhed, sprang to one side, and muttering between his teeth: "The old end of the song!" (Das alte Ende vom Liede!) passed on with the same light jaunty step.

"What did he say, the good-for-nothing fellow?" asked

Sanin, turning to run after him ; but Gemma held him back, and walked on, not withdrawing the hand that lay in his.

The Roselli house was now in sight. Gemma stood still again.

"Dimitri, Monsieur Dimitri," she said ; "we have not entered that house yet, we have not yet seen Mamma. If you wish to think it over if——you are still free, Dimitri." In reply, Sanin pressed her hand tightly, tightly to his breast, and led her on.

"Mamma," said Gemma, entering with Sanin the room where sat Frau Lenore, "I have brought you the right one!"

XXIX.

If Gemma had declared that she had brought with her the cholera or Death itself, Frau Lenore, one would suppose, could not have received the intelligence in greater despair. She at once repaired to a corner, turned her face to the wall, and burst into tears, sobbing and wailing like a Russian peasant woman over the grave of her husband or son. At first, Gemma was so dismayed that she did not even go up to her mother, but stood like a statue, in the centre of the room ; while Sanin became quite bewildered, and could have given way to tears himself. This ceaseless wailing lasted an hour—a whole hour! Pantaleone took the precaution of closing the outer door of the shop, in case of any one entering—although, fortunately, it was still early in the morning. The old man himself was perplexed, and did not in any way approve of the haste with which Gemma and Sanin had acted ; nevertheless he would not venture to judge them, and was willing to offer them his protection, if needful; his aversion for Klüber was so intense! Emile considered himself the mediator between his friend and sister, and almost prided himself on the successful turn affairs had taken! He was utterly unable to understand Frau Lenore's grief, and came to the heartfelt conclusion there and then, that women, even the best of them, suffered from a lack of reflective qualities! Sanin was the most to be pitied. Frau Lenore sobbed

still louder, and motioned him away with her hands whenever he drew nearer toward her; and it was in vain that he exclaimed from a distance, several times and in a loud voice: "I ask for the hand of your daughter!" Frau Lenore felt particularly annoyed with herself, that she could have been so blind, and noticed nothing! "Had but my Giovan' Battista been alive," she kept repeating through her tears, "all this would never have happened!"—"Good God, but what is all this about?" thought Sanin, "it is too ridiculous!" He dared not look at Gemma, nor did she either venture to raise her eyes to him. She confined herself to patiently devoting all her attention to her mother, who at first only repulsed her advances.

But at length, little by little, the storm subsided. Frau Lenore ceased crying, allowed Gemma to lead her from out the corner she had retired into, to seat her in the arm-chair by the window, and to give her some orange-flower water; allowed Sanin, not to approach her—oh! no—but at least to remain in the room—(before she had commanded him to leave her presence)—and no longer contradicted and interrupted him when he spoke. Sanin lost no time in improving the shining hour, and displayed most astonishing eloquence: he could hardly have expressed his intentions and feelings to Gemma herself more convincingly or with greater ardor. These feelings were the sincerest, these intentions the purest. He did not conceal from Frau Lenore or from himself the disadvantages of these intentions; but these disadvantages were only imaginary ones. True, he was a foreigner, they had not known him long, they knew nothing positive about himself personally or about his income: but he was prepared to bring forward all the necessary proofs that he was respectable and not in poverty; he would refer her to countrymen of his own who would testify to the truth of his assertions! He hoped that Gemma would be happy with him, and that he would be able to render her separation from her family less painful to her! At the mention of this separation—the one word "separation" was almost the ruin of the whole thing—Frau Lenore looked stunned and trembled all over.

Sanin hastened to remark that the parting woull only be a temporary one, and that after all, perhaps there would even be none at all!

His eloquence was not lost in air; Frau Lenore began now to look at him, though haughtily and reproachfully, but no longer with the same repugnance and anger; then she allowed him to draw near her and even to sit next her, (Gemma sat on her other side;) she reproached him not by looks alone, but in words, which showed her heart was softening: she began to complain, and her complaints grew milder and calmer; they were followed by alternate questions directed at times to her daughter, at times to Sanin; then she allowed him to take her by the hand, and did not draw it away; then she cried again, but with other tears; then she smiled sadly and regretted the absence of Giovani Battista, but in a different sense this time. Another moment went by, and both culprits, Sanin and Gemma, were on their knees at her feet, and she was placing her hands on their heads; yet another moment, and they were embracing and kissing her, and Emile, with a face beaming with delight, had rushed into the room, and thrown himself into that closely joined group.

Pantaleone peered into the room, smiled and contracted his brows both at the same time, and going into the shop opened the outer door.

XXX.

The transition from despair to grief, and again from grief to gentle resignation, had been rather sudden in Frau Lenore; but this gentle resignation soon turned into a feeling of secret satisfaction which, however, she strove to conceal and restrain in various ways, for propriety's sake. Sanin had inspired her with a favorable impression from the very first day she saw him; having familiarized herself with the idea of having him for a son-in-law, she now no longer found any thing particularly disagreeable in the thought of it, although she deemed it her duty to retain a somewhat offended air—or rather a troubled expression. The events that had taken place during the last few days

were so unusual; one thing had led to another! As a practical woman and as a mother, Frau Lenore considered it also her duty to subject him to various questions; and Sanin, who, when he went to meet Gemma in the morning, had no idea whatever of proposing marriage to her—true, he did not think of any thing at the time, but only yielded himself entirely to his passion—Sanin entered into his new rôle readily, and one may say boldly, and gave her minute and willing answers to all her questions. Being convinced that he was a real born noble, and even showing some astonishment that he was not a prince, Frau Lenore assumed a serious air and “warned him beforehand” that she intended to be thoroughly and unceremoniously frank with him, as the sacred duty of a mother obliged her to be so; to which Sanin answered that it was only what he expected of her, and besought her himself to show him no mercy!

Then Frau Lenore told him that Herr Klüber—(in mentioning his name, she sighed faintly, compressed her lips and hesitated)—Herr Klüber, Gemma’s former suitor was already in the possession of an income of eight thousand guldens—and with each year this sum would increase considerably—but what was the extent of his, Mr. Sanin’s, income?

“Eight thousand guldens,” repeated Sanin slowly. “In our money, that is about fifteen thousand rubles. My income is very much less. I have a small estate in the government of Toula. Properly managed, it might and would most certainly bring me in five or six thousand. And if I enter the service, I could easily receive a pay of two thousand.”

“To enter the service in Russia?” exclaimed Frau Lenore. “Then, consequently, I should have to part with Gemma!”

“I might enter into diplomacy,” said Sanin quickly; “I have some connections—then the service is abroad. But there is another thing I might do—and that is better still: sell my estate and employ the capital derived from it in some profitable enterprise, namely, in improving and per-

fecting your business." Sanin felt conscious of the incongruity of this proposal, but an indescribable spirit of venture had taken possession of him. He looked at Gemma, who, since the commencement of this "practical conversation," kept constantly rising from her chair, walking about the room, and returning to her seat—he looked at her—and all obstacles vanished, and he felt ready to settle all things, in the best possible manner, if only she could be relieved from all anxiety!

"Herr Klüber also wished to give me a small sum for the improvement of the business," said Frau Lenore after some hesitation.

"Mother! for God's sake! Mother!" exclaimed Gemma in Italian.

"These things must be taken into consideration in good time, my daughter," answered Frau Lenore in the same language.

She addressed herself again to Sanin, and commenced inquiring about the laws existing in Russia relating to marriages, and whether there were any impediments in entering into matrimony with a Catholic, as there were in Prussia. (At that time, in the year 1840, all Germany still remembered the dispute of the Prussian Government with the Archbishop of Cologne, arising from mixed marriages.) When Frau Lenore heard that marrying a Russian noble, her daughter would become noble herself, she exhibited a certain amount of satisfaction. "But must you not first return to Russia?" she said.

"Why?"

"Why not? You must receive permission from your sovereign?" Sanin explained to her that this was entirely unnecessary; but that, may be, he would be obliged to go to Russia before the wedding for a short time—(saying this, his heart sank within him—and Gemma, who was watching him, saw the pain these words occasioned him—blushed and grew pensive)—and that while there he would seize every opportunity of disposing of his property; at all events, he would bring back the needful money.

"I should like you also to bring me some good Astra

han skins for a mantle," said Frau Lenore; "they say they are wonderfully good there, and wonderfully cheap."

"Certainly, with the greatest pleasure, I shall bring you and Gemma some!" exclaimed Sanin.

"And bring me a morocco leather cap worked with silver," put in Emile, looking in from the next room.

"Very well, I shall—and Pantaleone shall have a pair of slippers."

"What is that for? What for?" said Frau Lenore. "We are speaking seriously. But I wish to make another observation," added the practical lady. "You say you will sell your property. But how will you accomplish that? Then, apparently, you will have to sell your peasants also!"

Sanin was taken aback. He recollects that, when talking to Mme. Roselli and her daughter on the Serf question, which, according to his own words, awakened the deepest indignation within him, he repeatedly assured them that never and on no account would he sell his serfs, as he considered such a sale to be an unnatural proceeding.

"I shall try to sell my property to a man whom I know thoroughly," said he, rather hesitatingly, "or, perhaps, the peasants will want to buy their liberty."

"That would be far better," acquiesced Frau Lenore, "otherwise to sell human beings . . ." "Barbari!" growled Pantaleone who had put in his head at the door, after Emile, shook his tuft of hair, and vanished again."

"Horrible!" thought Sanin to himself—and looked stealthily toward Gemma. She seemed not to have noticed his last words, "Well, never mind!" thought he again.

This practical conversation continued until dinner time. Frau Lenore had become by this time quite appeased, and already called Sanin, Dimitri; shook her finger at him fondly, and promised to be revenged for his artfulness. Many and minute were the questions she put to him about his country, as "that was also of great importance;" she requested him to describe the marriage ceremony, as it is performed in the Russian church, and went into ecstasies

beforehand at Gemma's appearance in a white dress, with a golden crown on her head.

"She is beautiful, and like a queen," said the old lady with all the pride of a mother; "there are no queen ever as beautiful in the world!"

"There is not another Gemma in the world!" put in Sanin.

"Yes; and that is why she is called Gemma!" (It is well known that Gemma in Italian means a gem.)

Gemma rushed to embrace and kiss her mother. It seemed that only now she breathed freely—that only now the crushing weight had fallen from off her soul.

And Sanin suddenly felt himself so happy, his heart was so full of childish joy at the thought, that those dreams he had indulged in, in those very same rooms, had all come to pass; his spirits and energy rose so rapidly that he immediately betook himself to the shop and was determined on standing behind the counter as he had done a short time ago. "I have the full right to assist! Am I not one of the family now?" And he actually took up his position behind the counter and served the customers, *i.e.*, sold to two little girls one pound of sweets and weighed off two, taking only half the money.

At dinner he took his seat next Gemma as her recognized lover. Emile never ceased laughing all the time, and worried Sanin to take him to Russia with him. It was decided that Sanin should leave in two weeks. Pantaleone alone had such a stern countenance that Frau Lenore felt herself obliged to reprove him for it, adding contemptuously: "And this indeed was the second in the duel!" Pantaleone only looked at her from beneath his eyebrows.

Gemma was silent all through dinner, but she had never looked more beautiful or happier. After dinner, she called Sanin out into the garden for a minute, and, standing by the very same bench where she had sorted the cherries three days ago, said to him: "Dimitri, do not be angry with me, but I wish to remind you once more, that you are not to consider yourself bound." He would not allow her to continue what she was about to say. Gemma bent

ner face down. "And as to what mamma said—you remember? about the difference in our faith, this is what I think of it."

She seized a small garnet cross that hung on her neck on a thin cord, pulled the cord violently and burst it—and gave him the cross.

"If I am yours, then your faith is my faith!" Sanin's eyes were still moist with tears when he returned with Gemma into the house.

Toward evening every thing went on in the usual routine. They even played at *tressetti*.

XXXI.

Sanin awoke very early the next morning; he was on the highest pinnacle of human happiness; but that did not prevent his sleeping; the question, the vital question, how he was to sell his property as quickly and advantageously as possible, troubled his rest. Various plans entered his head, but none of them would do. He rose, and went out to breathe the fresh air and to collect his thoughts. With a settled plan—not otherwise—would he appear before Gemma.

What figure was that, rather heavy-looking and stout-legged, yet well dressed, limping slightly, and waddling along in front of him? Where had he seen the back of that head covered with sandy-colored hair, and set so squarely on the shoulders; that soft plump back, those puffy, flabby hands? Could it be Polozoff, his old school-fellow, whom he had lost sight of these five years? Sanin overtook the figure in advance of him, and beheld a wide, yellowish-looking face, small pig-eyes with white eyelashes and eyebrows, a short, flat nose, thick lips, as though sealed together, a round, beardless chin—and the whole expression of that face, sour, indolent, and suspicious—yes, truly, it was no other than Ippolit Polozoff!

"Is not this again my lucky star guiding me?" was Sanin's sudden thought.

"Polozoff! Ippolit Sidoritch? is that you?" The figure stopped, lifted its small eyes, waited a moment, and unsealing at last its lips, said in a hoarse falsetto voice,

"Dimitri Sanin?"

"The very same!" exclaimed Sanin, pressing his hands warmly, which, incased in a pair of tight-fitting gray gloves, dropped again inanimately to his side. "Have you been here long? From whence do you come? Where are you stopping?"

"I came from Wiesbaden, yesterday," answered Polozoff slowly, "to make some purchases for my wife, and I return again to-day."

"Ah! yes; you are married, and people say to such a beautiful woman!"

Polozoff turned his eyes aside. . . .

"Yes, so people say."

Sanin broke out into a laugh. "I see you are just the same—as phlegmatic as you were at school."

"Why should I change?"

"And it is said," added Sanin, laying a deal of stress on the words; "it is said, that your wife is very rich."

"That is said also."

"But is that not known to yourself, Ippolit Sidoritch?"

"I—Dimitri Paolovitch?—yes, Paolovitch! do not interfere in my wife's affairs."

"Do not interfere? not in any affairs?"

Polozoff again turned his eyes aside. "Not in any She—manages for herself—well, and so do I."

"Where are you going to now?" asked Sanin.

"At this moment I am not going anywhere. I am standing in the street, talking to you; but as soon as we shall have finished our conversation, I shall go back to my hotel—and have luncheon."

"Will you take me with you?"

"That is to say—you mean to luncheon?"

"Yes."

"I shall be most happy; it is merrier eating two together. You are not great talker?"

"I don't think so."

"Well, then, that is all right." Polozoff moved on, Sanin followed by his side, thinking and wondering.

Polozoff's lips were again sealed together; he wheezed and rolled along silently. Sanin kept thinking and wondering by what means this blockhead had been able to secure a rich and pretty wife. Polozoff was not rich was not distinguished nor clever; in school he had had the fame of being a dull lout of a boy, a sluggard, and a glutton; and bore the nickname of "Slobber-chops." It was marvelous!

"But if his wife is so very rich—they say she is the daughter of some excise-farmer—would she not buy my estate? Although he says he does not meddle with his wife's affairs, one can not put any faith in that! Then I might put a fair, profitable price on it! Why should I not try, at all events? May be this is my lucky star still guiding me. . . . Decided! I shall see what I can do!"

Polozoff brought Sanin to one of the best hotels in Frankfort, and in which, of course, he occupied the best apartments. The chairs and tables were encumbered with huge bandboxes and parcels. "All these are purchases for Maria Nikolaevna!" (That was the name of his wife.) Polozoff sank down into an armchair, groaned, "What a heat!" and unfastened his neck-tie. He then rang for the head-waiter, and carefully ordered a most sumptuous luncheon. "And the carriage is to be ready in an hour! Do you hear, in exactly an hour!"

The head-waiter bowed most respectfully, and humbly retired.

Polozoff unbuttoned his waistcoat. By the very manner in which he arched his eyebrows, puffed and wheezed, and puckered his nose, one could tell what a great exertion speaking must be to him, and how anxiously he must be wondering whether Sanin would oblige him to

move his tongue, or take upon himself the trouble of keeping up the conversation. Sanin understood the mood he was in, and did not tire him with questions; he limited himself to those that were simply indispensable; he discovered that he had been two years in the service —(in the Uhlans Regiment! What a sight he must have been in a short-jacket!) and married three years ago—this was his second year abroad with his wife, “who was undergoing some cure at Wiesbaden”—and that he was next going to Paris. Sanin, in his turn, also did not enlarge much on his past life, or on his plans; he plunged immediately into the important subject, that is, announced his intention of selling his estate.

Polozoff listened to him silently, casting his eyes occasionally to the door, through which the luncheon was to make its appearance. It came at last. The head waiter, accompanied by two other servants, brought in several dishes with silver covers. “Is this estate in the government of Tula?” inquired Polozoff, sitting down to table, and tucking his napkin into his shirt-collar.

“Yes, in the government of Tula.”

“In the district of Yefremoff. . . . I know it.”

“You know my estate, then?” asked Sanin, also taking his seat.

“I know it, of course.” Polozoff crammed his mouth full of omelet and truffles. “Maria Nikolaevna—my wife—has some property next to yours. . . . Open this bottle, waiter! Your land is pretty good—only the peasants have been cutting down your wood. But why are you selling your estate?”

“I am in need of money, my friend. I would sell it cheaply. What do you say to your buying it. . . . It would suit you.”

Polozoff swallowed a glass of wine, wiped his mouth with his napkin, and began munching again, slowly and loudly.

“Ye . . . s,” he said at last. “But I do not buy estates. I have no capital. Hand me the butter. Perhaps my wife might be induced to buy it. You speak

to her about it. If you do not ask too much. . . . she does not despise business. . . . But what asses these Germans are, to be sure ! They even do not know how to boil a fish ! And what is there more simple ! Yet they can talk of the Fatherland being united ! Waiter, take that beastliness away !"

"Can it be really true that your wife manages her own affairs ?" asked Sanin.

"She does. These cutlets are good. I recommend them to you. I have told you, Dimitri Paolovitch, that I meddle in none of my wife's affairs—and I repeat it again."

Polozoff continued munching.

"Hem ! . . . But how can I talk the matter over with her, Ippolit Sidoritch ?"

"Very simply, Dimitri Paolovitch. Come to Wiesbaden. It is not far from here. Waiter, have you any English mustard ? No ? Beasts ! Only don't lose time. We leave the day after to-morrow. Allow me to fill your glass ; this wine has a bouquet—it is not vinegar."

Polozoff's face had become red and animated ; it was only animated when he ate or drank.

"Really—I don't know what to do ?" muttered Sanin.

"But what has so suddenly embarrassed you ? Is it a large sum that you require ?"

"A large sum. I—how shall I tell you ! I am thinking—of getting married."

Polozoff put down his glass, which he was in the act of carrying to his lips. "Getting married !" he said, in a voice hoarse with astonishment, and folding his puffy hands over his stomach—"so suddenly !"

"Yes, . . . and soon."

"The lady is—in Russia, of course ?"

"No, not in Russia."

"Where, then ?"

"Here, at Frankfort."

"And who is she ?"

"A German, that is, no—an Italian, an inhabitant of this place."

"With money?"

"Without."

"Consequently, your love is very ardent."

"What a queer fellow you are! Of course it is."

"And it is for this you want money?"

"Well, yes—yes, yes."

Polozoff finished his wine, cleaned his mouth, and rinsed his hands, wiped them carefully on the napkin, and lit his cigar. Sanin looked at him in silence.

"The only thing to be done," said Polozoff, throwing his head back and blowing a thin cloud of smoke, "is this—go to my wife. She, if she chooses, will help you out of your difficulty."

"But how shall I see your wife? You say you are leaving the day after to-morrow."

Polozoff closed his eyes.

"You know what I advise you to do," he said, twisting his cigar with his lips and sighing. "Go home, dress yourself quickly—and come back here. In an hour's time I start; my carriage is large. I can take you with me. That is the best way. And now I shall have a nap. I always sleep after eating. Nature demands it—and I do not object. Do not disturb me."

Sanin thought and thought—and suddenly raised his head: he had decided.

"Well, very well, I agree, and I thank you. I shall be here at half-past twelve—and we shall start together for Wiesbaden. I hope your wife will not be annoyed. . . .

But Polozoff was already snoring. He mumbled, "Don't disturb me!" kicked out his feet, and fell asleep like a child.

Sanin cast his eyes once more on his heavy figure, his head, his neck, his lifted chin as round as an apple—and, leaving the hotel, went quickly to Roselli's. Gemma had to be acquainted with this sudden resolution.

XXXII.

He found her in the shop with her mother, Frau Lenore, who, with bended back, was measuring with a folding footmeasure the distances between the windows. Seeing Sanin, she straightened herself and welcomed him joyfully, not, however, without some confusion.

"Since what you said yesterday," she began, "I have but one idea in my head—to improve our shop. Here, I think of placing two small cupboards with glass shelves. They are all the fashion now. And then . . ."

"That would be splendid, splendid," interrupted Sanin—"we must arrange all that. . . . But come here, I have something to tell you." He offered his arms to Frau Lenore and Gemma, and led them into the next room. Frau Lenore looked disturbed and dropped the measure. Gemma would have looked anxious likewise, but a glance from Sanin had reassured her. His face wore indeed a troubled expression, but it was at the same time animated with courage and decision.

He asked both the ladies to sit down, whilst he himself stood before them and, gesticulating with his hands and ruffling his hair, told them all that had happened: his encounter with Polozoff, the proposed journey to Wiesbaden, the probability of the disposing of his estate. "Fancy my luck," exclaimed he, at last; "affairs have taken such a turn that even perhaps I shall not be obliged to go to Russia! And we can have the wedding much sooner than I expected!"

"When must you go?" asked Gemma.

"To-day—in an hour; my friend has hired a carriage—he will take me with him."

"You will write to us?"

"Immediately! as soon as I shall have spoken to this lady, I shall write to you."

"This lady you say is very rich?" asked the practical Frau Lenore.

"Exceedingly rich! her father was a millionaire—and left her every thing."

"Every thing—to her alone? Well, that is your luck. Only, mind, do not underrate your estate! Be sensible and firm. Do not allow yourse'f to be led away. I can understand your eager desire to become Gemma's husband, but precaution above all things! Do not forget: the dearer you sell your estate, the more you will have for yourselves—and your children."

Gemma turned away, and Sanin again commenced his gesticulations. "You may rest assured, Frau Lenore, that I shall be cautious! And I shall not bargain. I shall name the price I have fixed: if she agrees to it, well and good; if not, there will be the end of it."

"Are you acquainted—with this lady?" asked Gemma.

"I have never seen her."

"And when do you return?"

"If this affair ends in nothing, I shall return the day after to-morrow; if, however, it succeeds, perhaps I shall have to stay a day or two longer. At all events, I shall not lose a minute. Don't I leave my soul here? But I am forgetting that I have to go to my hotel before starting. . . . Give me your hand for luck, Frau Lenore—we always do that in Russia."

"The right or left?"

"The left—the one nearest the heart. I shall return the day after to-morrow, with my shield or on it! Something tells me I shall return victorious! Good-by, my good, my kind friends"

He embraced and kissed Frau Lenore, but he asked Gemma to come into her room for a minute, as he had something particular to say to her—something very important. He simply wanted to bid her farewell in private. Frau Lenore understood this, and was not curious to know what the important communication was about.

Sanin had never yet been in Gemma's room. All the enchantment of love, its raptures and its sweet hopes rose strong within him and entered his very soul, as soon as he had passed that sacred threshold. . . . He

looked around him with emotion, fell down at the feet of the young girl, and pressed his face against the skirt of her dress.

"Thou art mine?" she whispered; "thou wilt soon return?"

"I am thine—I shall return," he repeated breathlessly.

"I shall wait for thee, my beloved!"

A few moments later, Sanin was running along the street to his hotel. He never noticed that Pantaleone had rushed after him to the door, all disheveled—and had called after him and was menacing him with his uplifted hand.

Punctually at a quarter to one, Sanin made his appearance before Polozoff. The carriage, with a pair of black horses, was already standing at the door. On seeing Sanin, Polozoff only exclaimed, "Ah! you have decided?" and putting on his hat, coat, and galoshes, and stopping up his ears with cotton-wool, although it was summer-time, went out on the staircase. The waiters, according to his orders, had arranged all his numerous packages inside the carriage, had laid silk cushions on the seat, and had tied the portmanteau to the box outside. Polozoff paid the waiters with a bountiful hand; and respectfully assisted, though from the back, by the obliging porter, scrambled with a grunt into the carriage, seated himself, and flattened the cushions around him, got out his cigar and lit it—and only then beckoned with his finger to Sanin to come in likewise. Sanin sat down next to him. Polozoff told the porter to order the postillion to drive well, if he wanted a fee; the steps creaked, the doors were closed with a bang, the carriage rolled off.

XXXIII.

The journey now from Frankfort to Wiesbaden by rail, is less than an hour; at that time it took three hours posting, to do the distance. The horses were changed five times. Polozoff dozed and nodded, with his cigar between his lips, and spoke very seldom; he never once

looked out of the window : pretty landscapes did not amuse him, and he even declared that "Nature was the death of him!" Sanin was also very quiet, and did not admire the views : his mind was too busily occupied with deep thoughts and reminiscences. At the different post-stations, Polozoff paid the money with the greatest accuracy, noticed the time by his watch, and tipped the driver according to his deserts. When half the journey was performed, he produced from his provision-basket two oranges and, choosing the best for himself, offered the other to Sanin. The latter looked attentively at his fellow-traveler, and burst into a loud laugh.

"What are you laughing about?" asked Polozoff, carefully tearing off the peel of the orange with his short, white nails.

"What about?" repeated Sanin. "At our journey."

"What of it?" asked Polozoff again, shoving part of the orange into his mouth.

"It is so strange. Why, only yesterday you were as much in my thoughts as the emperor of China, and to-day I am travelling along with you to sell my estate to your wife, whom I have not the pleasure even of knowing."

"Stranger things happen," answered Polozoff. "Live a little longer, and you will see. For instance, can you imagine my riding at a review? And I really ride; and the Grand-Duke Michael Paolovitch gave the word of command, Trot! make the fat cornet trot! Trot faster!"

Sanin scratched the back of his ear.

"Tell me, please, Ippolit Sidoritch, what is your wife like? What are her tastes? I must know them."

"It was easy enough for him to give the command to trot!" continued Polozoff, with a sudden burst of passion; "but what was it for me? Thought I to myself, Take your tchins (rank) and your epaulets—in God's name! But—you were asking about my wife? What she is like? Like all human beings. Only don't put your fingers in her mouth; that she does not like

Above all, be talkative and amusing. Tell about your love—only in a funny, amusing way, you know."

"How shall I do that?"

"Why, you told me you were in love, and wanted to marry. Well, then, tell her all that."

Sanin looked offended. "What is there funny in that?"

Polozoff only cast his eyes around him. The juice of the orange was trickling down his chin.

"Your wife sent you to Frankfort to make these purchases?" asked Sanin, after a short pause.

"Yes."

"What do the purchases consist of?"

"The usual things, toys."

"Toys! have you any children?"

Polozoff suddenly shrank away from Sanin. "What else! Why on earth should I have children? Women's *chiffons*, chiefly articles of dress."

"But do you understand that sort of thing?"

"Of course."

"How is it, then, you said you did not interfere in your wife's affairs?"

"I don't interfere in any thing else; and this—is nothing. It passes the time away. And my wife relies on my taste. And I am clever at bargaining."

"And is your wife very rich?"

"Yes, she is rich. Only she spends her riches on herself."

"Nevertheless, it seems to me that you have no reason to complain."

"I am her husband. Of course I should profit by her money. And I am a useful man to her! With me, she has many advantages! I—am an easy-going man.' Polozoff wiped his face with his silk handkerchief, and commenced puffing as though he would have said, "Spare me; do not make me utter another word. You see what a trial talking is to me."

Sanin left him in peace—and buried himself again in his thoughts.

The hotel at Wiesbaden, in front of which the carriage drew up, was quite palatial in its appearance. Bells instantly resounded from within, followed by a great bustle and hurrying to and fro; respectable-looking men in black dress-coats skipped about the grand entrance, and a porter gleaming with gold opened the carriage-door with a flourish.

Polozoff alighted with the air of a triumvir, and ascended the richly carpeted staircase. A man rushed up to him, also well-dressed, but with a Russian face; it was his valet. Polozoff observed to him that in future he would always take him with him, as, the night before, at Frankfort, he, Polozoff, had been left without any hot water at night. The valet looked horror-stricken, and, bending down, took off his master's galoshes.

"Is Maria Nikolaevna at home?" asked Polozoff.

"Yes, sir, Madame is dressing. Madame dines at the Countess Lasunsky's."

"Ah! at that lady's! Stop! there are things in the carriage, take them all out yourself. And you, Dimitri Paolovitch," added Polozoff, "engage a room for yourself, and come in three quarters of an hour. We shall dine together."

Polozoff waddled along further, and Sanin got himself a small room, and having rested and dressed himself, proceeded to the spacious apartments, occupied by his "Serene Highness (Durchlaucht) Prince Polozoff."

He found the "Prince" reclining in a luxuriant velvet arm-chair in the centre of a magnificent salon. This phlegmatic friend of Sanin's had had time to take a bath and to envelop himself in the richest of dressing-gowns; on his head he wore a raspberry-colored fez. Sanin walked up to him and looked at him attentively some time. Polozoff sat motionless, like an idol; he neither turned his face toward him nor moved his eyelids, nor emitted a sound. The sight was, in truth, an imposing one! After admiring him for a minute or two, Sanin was about to break the solemn silence by making a remark, when the door from the next room was suddenly

opened, and there appeared on the threshold a young and pretty woman, in a white silk dress trimmed with black lace, and with diamonds sparkling on her arms and neck. It was no other than Marie Nikolaevna Polozoff. Her thick auburn hair fell in two heavy plaits on each side of her head.

XXXIV.

"Oh! I beg your pardon," she said, with a half-embarrassed, half-derisive smile, catching hold of the ends of her plaits, and fixing her large, bright gray eyes on Sanin; "I did not know that you were already here."

"Sanin, Dimitri Petrovitch, a comrade of my childhood," said Polozoff, as before, not turning to him nor rising from his chair, but only pointing to him with his finger.

"Yes . . . I know . . . you have already told me that. I am very happy to make your acquaintance. But I wished to ask you, Ippolit Sidoritch . . . my maid is so stupid to-day . . ."

"To arrange your hair?"

"Yes, yes, please do. Excuse me," she repeated with her previous smile, nodding to Sanin, and turning quickly, disappeared through the door, leaving behind her a momentary impression of a lovely neck, perfectly shaped shoulders, and a wonderful form. Polozoff rose, and, walking heavily across the room, passed through the same door into the next room.

Sanin did not doubt for one moment but that the mistress of the house had been fully conscious of his presence in "Prince" Polozoff's salon; it was evident her object was to show her hair, which was really very fine. Sanin even rejoiced inwardly at this exhibition of coquetry on her part. "If," thought he, "she is so anxious to astonish and dazzle me with her beauty—perhaps, who knows? she will also be willing to agree to the price I set on my estate." His heart was so full of the thought of Gemma that all other women were of

no significance whatever to him : he hardly noticed them and on this occasion, he limited himself to merely one passing thought, " It is true, they told me she was charming!"

Had not his mind been so exclusively preoccupied, probably he would have expressed himself differently. Maria Nikolaevna Polozoff, *née* Kolyshkin, was a very remarkable lady. She was not an acknowledged beauty ; the traces of her plebeian extraction were even distinctly visible in her. Her forehead was low, her nose rather thick and turned up ; she could not boast of the fineness of her skin or the delicacy of her hands ; but what of that ? Not before a " shrine of beauty," to use Pushkin's words, would every one stand still, who met her, but before the powerful witchery of a blooming woman, half-Russian, half-gipsy. And the desire to stand and gaze at her would be an involuntary one.

But Gemma's image guarded and protected Sanin, like that triple armor of which poets sing.

After the lapse of ten minutes, Maria Nikolaevna, again made her appearance accompanied by her husband. She went up to Sanin . . . and her steps were such as drove men, in those times, alas ! now long since past, out of their senses. " When this woman approaches you, it seems as though she were bringing you all your life's happiness," said one of these men. She drew near to Sanin, and, giving him her hand, said in her kind, subdued voice, in Russian, " You will stay until my return, will you not ? I shall be back early."

Sanin bowed respectfully, and Maria Nikolaevna vanished through the door, and, vanishing, again turned her head over her shoulder, and again smiled, and again left that pleasing impression of herself behind her. When she smiled, not one or two, but three dimples showed themselves on each cheek ; and her eyes smiled more than her lips, more than those full, pink, enticing lips, with two small moles on one side.

Polozoff returning to the room, took possession again of the arm-chair. He remained as silent as before, but

an odd smile of derision broke out, from time to time, on his colorless and already wrinkled cheeks.

He had an old-looking face, although he was only three years older than Sanin.

The dinner which he gave his visitor was, of course, such as would have met with the approval of the most exacting gourmand, but to Sanin, it was an endless and unbearable ordeal! Polozoff went through his dinner slowly, pausing and bending closely over the contents of his plate, and almost putting his nose into his food: he first rinsed his mouth with wine, then swallowed it and smacked his lips. . . . Over the roast, he suddenly opened out a conversation—but on what? On Spanish sheep. He announced his intention of writing out for a whole herd of them; described them most minutely and carefully, and gave them all sorts of pet diminutive names. After a burning hot, weak cup of coffee, (he reminded the waiter several times, in a tearful voice, that the night before he had been given coffee as cold as ice!) and biting the end of an Havana cigar, with his crooked, yellow teeth, he took his habitual nap, to the great delight of Sanin, who commenced pacing to and fro with silent steps over the soft carpet, thinking of his future life with Gemma, and of the news he would carry back to her! Polozoff, however, awoke sooner than was his custom, as he himself remarked—he had only slept about an hour and a half; drinking off a glass of Seltzer water with ice, and swallowing about eight spoonfuls of jam—Russian jam, which his valet brought him in a dark green Kieff jar—and without which, he said, he could not exist—he fixed his swollen eyes on Sanin, and asked him if he would not like to have a game of “Fools”^{”?”}* Sanin agreed willingly; he was in fear, lest Polozoff should resume his previous discussion on lambs, yearling ewes, and crispy fat morsels. The host and his guest returned to the drawing-room, the waiter brought the cards, and they began to play, but of course not for money.

* A game of cards played amongst the lower classes, and by children

It was at this innocent game that Maria Nikolaevna found them, on her return from the Countess Lasunsky's dinner-party.

She burst into a fit of laughter as soon as she entered the room and caught sight of the open card-table. Sanin jumped up from his seat, but she exclaimed, "Do sit down, and continue your game. I shall change my dress and come back to you," and vanished again, rustling her dress and pulling off her gloves as she went.

She came back very shortly. She had changed her elegant dress for an ample lilac silk dressing-gown with open hanging sleeves: a thick twisted cord encircled her waist. She sat down next her husband, and, waiting until he had lost the game and been made a fool, she said to him, "Well, my dumpling, that is enough!" (at the word "dumpling" Sanin looked astounded—while she smiled gayly, answering his look with another, and displaying all her dimples on her cheeks)—"that is enough; I see you are sleepy; kiss my hand and retire; and I shall have a chat *& deux* with Mr. Sanin."

"I have no inclination to sleep," muttered Polozoff, lifting his heavy weight from the chair, "but as to retiring—I shall do so, and I shall also kiss your hand." She raised the palm of her hand to his lips, and continued smiling and looking at Sanin.

Polozoff also glanced at him and withdrew, without bidding him good-night.

"Well, tell me every thing now, tell me," she said briskly, at the same time placing her bare elbows on the table and impatiently beating her nails together. "Is it true that you are going to be married?"

Saying these words, Maria Niko^laevna bent her head on one side, to look more fixedly and searchingly into Sanin's eyes.

XXXV.

The freedom and ease of Madame Polozoff's manner would probably have had the effect of confusing Sanin at first—although he was no novice, and had already seen

something of the world—had he not perceived a good opening for his enterprise through this same familiarity and freedom of manner. “I shall humor the whims of this rich lady,” decided he, in his own mind, and, using the same unreserved tone in which the question had been put, answered her, “Yes, I am going to be married.”

“To whom? To a foreigner?”

“Yes.”

“You became acquainted with her not long since? in Frankfort?”

“Exactly so.”

“And who is she? May I know?”

“Certainly, she is the daughter of a confectioner.”

Maria Nikolaevna opened wide her eyes and arched her eyebrows.

“How delightful!” she said slowly, “how wonderful! I was under the impression that such young men as you were not to be found in the world any more. The daughter of a confectioner!”

“I see you are rather astonished,” observed Sanin, in a dignified tone; “but, firstly, I do not possess those prejudices. . . .”

“Firstly, I am not in the least astonished,” interposed Maria Nikolaevna, “and I have no prejudices. I myself am the daughter of a peasant. Well, are you satisfied? I am surprised and pleased to have met with one who does not fear to love? You love her, do you not?”

“Yes.”

“Is she very pretty?”

Sanin was rather taken aback by this last question . . . however, there was no way of drawing out of it.

“You know, Maria Nikolaevna,” he began, “the face we love surpasses all others; but my affianced bride is really beautiful.”

“Really? In what style? Italian? English?”

“Yes, her features are regular.”

“You have not got her portrait?”

"No," (at that time photographs were not even thought of. Daguerreotypes had only just been introduced.)

"What is her name?"

"Her name is Gemma."

"And what is yours?"

"Dimitri."

"And your father's?"

"Paul."

"Do you know," said Maria Nikolaevna, in the same slow, measured tone, "you please me exceedingly, Dimitri Paolovitch? You must be a very good man. Give me your hand, and let us be friends." She pressed his hand firmly with her pretty, white, strong fingers. Her hand was not much smaller than his—but much warmer and smoother and softer, and with more vitality in it.

"Only you know what has struck me suddenly?"

"What?"

"You will not be angry? No? She, you say, is your affianced bride. But was that necessary?"

Sanin frowned. "I do not understand you, Maria Nikolaevna."

Maria Nikolaevna gave a quiet, meaning laugh, and, lifting her head, threw back her hair which had fallen over her cheek. "He is really charming," she murmured half pensively, half absently. "A knight-errant! After that, how is one to put any faith in people who assure you that idealists do not exist nowadays?"

Maria Nikolaevna spoke the whole time in pure Russian, pure Moscow Russian—in the language of the people, and not of the upper classes.

"Doubtlessly you were educated at home in the midst of an old-fashioned and God-fearing family? From what government are you?"

"The government of Tula."

"Then we are both from the same government. My father . . . You know who my father was?"

"Yes, I know."

"He was born at Tula. But now let us talk business."

"That is to say—how talk business? What do you mean by that?"

Maria Nikolaevna half closed her eyes.

"But with what object did you come here?" (When she closed her eyes in that manner, they assumed a rather kindly and satirical expression; but when again she opened them wide, in their bright, cold brilliancy there was a look that betokened something evil and menacing. The crowning beauty of her eyes was her eyebrows—which grew thick, and rather low.) "You wish me to buy your estate? You require money for your marriage? Am I not right?"

"Yes, I am in need of money."

"And is it much that you require

"For present emergencies, a few thousand francs would be sufficient. Your husband knows my estate, you can consult with him; but I should not ask too high a price for it."

Maria Nikolaevna shook her head. "*Firstly*," she said, pausing, and laying the tips of her fingers on the cuff of Sanin's coat, "I am not in the habit of consulting my husband, excepting on dress, and he is a first-rate judge in those matters; and secondly, why do you say that you will not fix a very high price on your estate? I do not wish to take advantage of you because you are in love and ready to make any sacrifices. . . . I shall accept no sacrifices from you. Instead of encouraging those noble sentiments of yours, am I to nip them in the bud? I am not in the habit of doing so. At times, I treat people unmercifully—but in a different way to that."

Sanin was puzzled to know whether she was serious or only making fun of him, and thought to himself, "Oh! I see, one must keep one's ears well open with you."

The servant came into the room with a Russian tea-urn, tea-cups, cream-pot, rusks, etc., which he laid out between Sanin and Mme. Polozoff, and then withdrew.

She poured him out a cup of tea. "You are not particular?" she asked, putting him in the sugar with her fingers, while the tongs lay on the tray.

"Not at all! and from such lovely fingers. . . . He did not finish the phrase, and almost choked himself with his tea, while she kept watching him attentively and sharply.

"I merely mentioned that I would take a moderate sum for my estate," he continued, "thinking that, as you were abroad, you would not have much money to spare; then again, I feel that the sale. . . . or the purchase of the estate, under similar conditions, would be an irregular proceeding, and I am bound to take this into consideration."

Sanin stammered in confusion, while Maria Nikolaevna leaning back in her chair with her hands folded on her lap, gazed at him with the same piercing, attentive look. At last he became silent.

"Never mind, speak, speak," she said, drawing him as it were out of his dilemma; "I am listening—I like to hear you talk; speak."

Sanin then commenced describing his estate, how many acres it contained, where it was situated, the household belongings, the profits that could be derived from it . . . and even gave a sketch of the picturesque position of the house; while Maria Nikolaevna kept looking and looking at him, more fixedly and searchingly, moving and biting her lips which bore no trace of a smile.

He began at last to feel awkward and discomposed under that pertinacious glance, and again was silent.

"Dimitri Paolovitch," began Maria Nikolaevna, and paused one moment in thought . . . "Dimitri Paolovitch," she repeated . . . "Do you know what: I am convinced that the purchase of your estate would be a very profitable transaction for me, and that we shall come to an agreement; but you must give me . . . two days—yes, two days for consideration. You can surely bear a separation of two days? I will not detain you longer—against your will—I give you my word o· honor. But if you are now in need of five or six thou-

sand francs, I shall be delighted to lend you that sum. We shall arrange the matter afterward."

Sanin rose. "I must thank you, Maria Nikolaevna, for your kind readiness in assisting one who is almost an utter stranger to you. . . . But if you decidedly wish it, I should prefer waiting for your final answer—and shall stay here two days longer."

"Yes; that is my wish, Dimitri Paolovitch. But it will be very trying to you? Tell me, will it not?"

"I love my affianced bride, Maria Nikolaevna—and a separation from her is hard to bear."

"O you treasure!" murmured Maria Nikolaevna, with a sigh. "I promise not to worry you. You are going?"
"It is late," observed Sanin.

"And you must rest after your journey—and after your game at 'Fools' with my husband. Tell me, are you a great friend of my husband's?"

"We were at the same school together."

"And was he the same as he is now?"

"How the same?" asked Sanin.

Maria Nikolaevna suddenly burst out laughing, and laughed till she was crimson in the face; she put her handkerchief up to her lips, rose from the chair, and, with an air of fatigue, went up to Sanin and stretched out her hand to him.

He bowed, and turned to the door.

"Come early to-morrow morning—do you hear?" she called after him. He looked round, as he passed through the door—and saw that she had again thrown herself into the arm-chair, and lifted both her hands to the back of her head. The wide sleeves of her morning dress had fallen back almost up to her shoulders—and it was impossible not to acknowledge that the position of those arms, the whole attitude of that figure was bewitchingly beautiful.

XXXVI.

The lamp in Sanin's room burned until long past midnight. He sat by the table and wrote to "his Gemma."

He told her every thing ; gave her a description of the Polozoffs—both husband and wife ; but enlarged more especially on his own feelings, and ended by appointing a meeting in three days' time!!! (With three notes of exclamation.) He posted this letter early the next morning, and went for a walk into the garden of the Cur-haus, where a band of music was playing. There were very few people there ; he stood before the small summer-house where the orchestra was placed, listened to a *potpourri* from *Robert le Diable* ; and having refreshed himself with a cup of coffee, went along an unfrequented side avenue, sat down on a bench, and lost himself in thought. The handle of a parasol came down rather heavily on his shoulder. He started. . . . In front of him, in a light gray-green *barge* dress and a white net bonnet, in Swedish gloves, and looking as fresh and as rosy as a summer's morn, but with a languor and drowsy listlessness in every look and movement, stood Maria Nikolaevna.

"How do you do?" she said. "I sent for you this morning, and you were already gone. I have just swallowed my second glass—you know, they force me to drink the waters here—God knows why—as if I am not healthy enough! And now I must walk a whole hour. Will you be my companion? We shall have a cup of coffee after our walk."

"I have already had my coffee," said Sanin, arising, "but I shall be very happy to walk with you."

"Well, then, give me your arm. Do not fear; your lady-love is not here; she will not see you."

Sanin smiled in a constrained manner. Each time Maria Nikolaevna mentioned Gemma's name, an unpleasant feeling came over him. But he bowed in complaisance, and Maria Nikolaevna, slipping her hand through his arm, leaned gently and clingingly on him.

"Come—this way," she said to him, throwing back her open parasol over her shoulder. "I am quite at home in this park; I shall take you to the prettiest part of it. And do you know what, (she constantly used this expression,) we shall talk no more of this purchase? We shal'

leave that until after breakfast. You must tell me now about yourself, so that I may know with whom I have to deal. And after that, if you wish, I shall relate you something about myself. Do you consent?"

"But, Maria Nikolaevna, what interest can there be for you—"

"Stay, stay. You misunderstand me. I do not wish to flirt with you." Maria Nikolaevna shrugged her shoulders. "He has a love as beautiful as an antique statue—and am I to flirt with him? But you have the merchandise, and I am the merchant. For that reason, I must know what your merchandise is like. Well, then, show it to me. I not only wish to know what I buy, but also of whom I buy. This was my father's method. Well, begin then. Not from your infancy; tell me how long you have been abroad? And where you were until now? And walk slowly—we are in no hurry."

"I came here from Italy, where I spent several months."

"All your predilections, then, are evidently Italian? Strange you did not meet with the object of your love in Italy. Are you fond of art, pictures, or music?"

"I am fond of art. I love every thing that is beautiful."

"And music?"

"And music also."

"And I do not in the least care for it. I only like Russian songs—and then I only care to hear them in the villages, in the spring-time, with dancing. Peasants dressed in their scarlet shirts, the young grass springing up in the meadows, and a sweet fragrance and freshness pervading the air—delightful! But enough of that. Tell me, then, about yourself."

Maria Nikolaevna kept constantly casting furtive glances at Sanin. She was a tall woman, and her face was almost on a level with his.

He then began relating—at first unwillingly and awkwardly, but by degrees he got more expansive, and rattled on, thoroughly at his ease. Maria Nikolaevna listened to him with rapt attention; she appeared so frank and confiding that she involuntarily elicited the confidence of others

She possessed that dangerous gift of familiarity—"le terrible don de la familiarité," spoken of by Cardinal Retz. Sanin related his travels, his life in Petersburg, his youthful experiences. Had Maria Nikolaevna been a refined woman of the world, he would never have made these disclosures; but she called herself a good, easy-going creature, and an enemy to all ceremony.

This was the character she gave Sanin of herself. And at the same time this "good, easy-going creature" walked by his side with a cat-like step, leaning softly on him, and giving him sidelong glances; and he walked next this image of young womanhood, so fraught with that overpowering and languid, gentle and dangerous seduction, which has the power of enslaving us weak erring men—not men with pure blood in our veins, but of the crossbreed—Slavonic natures!

This walk and *tête-à-tête* lasted more than an hour. They never stopped once, but went always on and on, along the endless avenues of the park, ascending the high ground, and admiring the views, descending again, and hiding in the dark deep shadows, and the whole time arm in arm. At times Sanin even felt vexed with himself: with Gemma, with his own dear Gemma, he had never walked so long—and here had this woman taken entire possession of him! "Are you not tired?" he asked more than once. "I never tire," she answered. Occasionally they came across people walking in the park; they almost all bowed to her, some respectfully, others with servility. To one of these, a very good-looking, fashionably-dressed, dark-haired man, she called out from a distance, in the very best Parisian accent, "Comte, vous savez, il ne faut pas venir me voir, ni aujourd'hui ni demain." The young man took off his hat in silence, and made a low bow.

"Who is that?" asked Sanin, from a habit of curiosity which is peculiarly Russian.

"That? A Frenchman—there are a great many philandering about here. . . . He is dangling after me like wise. But it is time to have coffee. Come home; you

must be starving. My lawful lord and master must have scratched his eyes out by this time."

"My lawful lord and master scratched his eyes out!" repeated Sanin to himself; "and she speaks such perfect French . . . what an odd creature!"

Maria Nikolaevna was right. When she and Sanin returned to the hotel, the "lawful lord and master," or "dumpling," was already seated, with his inseparable fez on his head, before the breakfast-table.

"I have been waiting for you," he exclaimed with a sour face, "and was going to take my coffee without you."

"Never mind, never mind," returned Maria Nikolaevna gayly. "You were angry? A little temper is good for your health; without it you would collapse entirely. I have brought our visitor with me. Ring quickly! Let us have some coffee, coffee, the best of coffee, in Dresden cups, on a snow-white cloth!"

She took off her bonnet and gloves, and clapped her hands.

Polozoff looked at her from beneath his eyebrows.

"Why have you been capering about this morning, Maria Nikolaevna?" he said in an under tone.

"It is not your business, Ippolit Sidoritch! Ring the bell! Dimitri Paolovitch, take a seat, and take your second cup of coffee! Oh! how pleasant it is to give orders! There is no such pleasure in the world!"

"When you are obeyed," grumbled the husband.

"Exactly, when you are obeyed! That is why it gives me such pleasure, especially with you. Am I not right, my dumpling? But here comes our coffee."

On a big tray which the waiter brought in lay also a hand-bill. Maria Nikolaevna seized it instantly.

"A drama!" she exclaimed indignantly. "A German drama! But it is all the same: it is better than a German comedy. Take me a box *à baignoire*—or no—better get the *Fremden Loge*," she said, addressing the waiter. "Do you hear? You must be sure to get me the *Fremden Loge*!"

"But if the *Fremden Loge* is already taken by His Excellency the City Governor?" was the waiter's daring rejoinder.

"Give His Excellency ten thalers, but the box must be mine! Do you hear?"

The waiter bowed respectfully.

"Dimitri Paolovitch, you will come to the theatre with me? German acting is a fearful bore, but you will come . . . Yes? Yes! How obliging you are! Will you go, my dumpling?"

"Just as you like," answered Polozoff, from out his cup.

"You know what: remain at home. You always sleep at the theatre, and you understand very little German. You had far better do this: write an answer to our steward —you recollect about our mill, . . . about the peasants grinding their corn in it. Tell him that I disapprove of it, and will not allow it! There, you have an occupation for the whole evening. . . ."

"Very well," answered Polozoff.

"Well, that is charmingly arranged. You are a good fellow. And now, gentlemen, since we have commenced talking about the steward, let us discuss the affair we have on hand. As soon as the waiter has cleared the table, you will tell us all about it, Dimitri Paolovitch . . . all about your estate, the price you will sell it at, how much money you want in advance—in one word, every thing!" ("At last," thought Sanin, "the Lord be praised!") "You have already given me some idea of it. I think I remember you gave me a charming description of your garden; but Dumping was not present during that conversation. . . . Let him hear it; it will please him! It delights me to think that I can aid you in your marriage, and I have promised to be all attention to you after breakfast; and I always keep my promises; is that not true, Ippolit Sidoritch?"

Polozoff rubbed his face with the palm of his hand.
"What is true, is true: you never deceive any one."

"Never! and I never shall deceive any one. Well, Dimitri Paolovitch, expound the matter, as we say in the senate."

XXXVII.

Sanin began "to expound the matter," that is, to describe the estate for the second time, but without touching on the beauty of the neighborhood; and from time to time referring to Polozoff, to corroborate the facts and figures he laid before them. But Polozoff only snorted and moved his head about; whether approvingly or disapprovingly, the devil alone could tell. But Maria Nikolaevna stood in no need of his assistance. She exhibited an amount of ability in commercial and administrative matters that was quite astounding! She was thoroughly acquainted with all the details of farming, and questioned him minutely on every thing, and every word she uttered was to the purpose, she put her dots on every i. Sanin had not expected such an examination, and had not prepared himself for it. This examination lasted full an hour and a half. He experienced all the sensations of a prisoner, seated on a narrow bench before a severe and penetrating judge. "But this is just like an examination!" he said disconcertedly to himself. Maria Nikolaevna laughed the whole time, as though it were all a good joke; but that was no relief to Sanin; and when, during this "examination," it appeared that he did not quite clearly comprehend the meaning of some of these special farming terms, he even broke out into a perspiration. . . .

"Well, now, that will do," said Maria Nikolaevna at last. "I know your estate exactly, as well as you do. What price do you place on each peasant?" (At that time the price of an estate, as is well known, was regulated by the number of peasants belonging to it.)

"I think . . . I can not take less than five hundred rubles," said Sanin with difficulty. (O Pantaleone, Pantaleone! where are you? This when you would have again exclaimed, *Barbari!*)

Maria Nikolaevna cast up her eyes as though to consider.

"Well!" she said, after a pause, "it is not too much. But I said I should take two days for consideration—and you must wait until to-morrow. I think we shall come to

an agreement, and you will then tell me how much hand money you require. And now, *basta così!*" she said quickly, observing that Sanin was about to make another remark. "We have had enough of this discussion on vile metal . . . à demain les affaires! You know what I give you leave of absence now . . . (she took out her small enameled watch and looked at it) until three o'clock. . . . You must be allowed to take a rest. Go and have a game at roulette."

"I never play at chance games," returned Sanin.

"Really? But you are a perfection. But I do not play either. It is very foolish to throw one's money to the wind—a sure game is better. Nevertheless, go to the gambling-room and watch the different countenances. Some are most amusing. There is an old woman there with a moustache—wonderful to behold! Then there is a Russian prince—also a sight! He is immensely tall, and has a nose like an eagle; he puts his thaler down, and crosses himself stealthily under his waistcoat. Read the journals, walk about, in one word, do what you like. . . . But at three o'clock I shall expect you here . . . *de pied ferme*. We must dine early to-day. These ridiculous Germans open their theatres at half-past six." She put out her hand to him. "*Sans rancune, n'est-ce pas?*"

"What a fancy, Maria Nikolaevna! Why should I be annoyed with you?"

"But for worrying you. Wait a bit, this is nothing to what it will be," she added, closing her eyes, and all her dimples breaking out suddenly on her suffused cheeks.

"Au revoir!"

Sanin bowed and withdrew. A gay laugh rang through the room. Passing a looking-glass, he saw a reflection of Maria Nikolaevna, who had knocked her husband's fez over his eyes, whilst the latter was struggling helplessly with his hands.

XXXVIII.

Oh! what a sigh of deep relief escaped Sanin when he found himself back in his own room! Truly, Maria Niko-

Iaevna was right, he required rest—rest after all those new faces, encounters, and discussions; after that dark mist that had penetrated into his brain and into his soul; after that unlooked-for and unwilling contact with a woman so utterly unknown to him. But when did all this happen? Very nearly on the next day after he had discovered Gemma's love for himself and he had become her affianced lover! This was surely a sacrilege! A thousand times did he plead in his heart for pardon of his pure, guileless dove, although he had no particular accusation to bring against himself; a thousand times did he kiss the small cross given to him by her. Had he not been buoyed up with hopes of satisfactorily winding up the affair which had brought him to Wiesbaden, he would have rushed immediately back to his loved Frankfort, to that dear house that was already home to him, to her, to her beloved feet. . . . But there was nothing to be done. The cup must be drunk to its dregs: he must dress, he must go to dinner, and then to the theatre. . . . If she would only release him to-morrow!

Yet another thing troubled and angered him. It was with love, with tenderness, with grateful joy that he thought of Gemma, of his life with her, of the happiness that awaited him in the future; and nevertheless, this odd, queer woman, this Madame Polozoff, was ever floating before his eyes—no, not floating, but shoving herself forward—that was the spiteful expression he used—shoving herself before his eyes, and he could not tear himself away from her image, could not help hearing her voice, or remembering her words. He could not help feeling sensitive to that delicate, fresh, and penetrating perfume, like the perfume of yellow lilies, which breathed from every fold of her dress. She was evidently making a fool of him, and trying to ensnare him. . . . What for? What did she want? Was not this merely the caprice of a spoiled, rich, and most likely an immoral woman? And this husband of hers? What kind of man could he be? On what footing were they? And why would these questions force themselves on him, Sanin, who was not personally interested in M. Polozoff or his wife? Why could he not drive away that

haunting image even then, when he turned with all his soul to that other image as bright and fair as the day itself? How dared those features intrude themselves before those most sacred to him? And they not only intruded, but boldly jeered at him. Those gray rapacious eyes, those dimples on the cheeks, those serpentlike braids of hair, could it be that they had enchain'd him so firmly that it was beyond his power ever to shake them off and cast them aside? Absurd! absurd! All this would vanish to-morrow, and leave no trace behind it. . . . But would she release him to-morrow?

Yes, . . . all these questions did he put to himself, and the time was close upon three o'clock when he put on his dress-coat. After a short walk in the park, he went to the Polozoffs'.

In the drawing-room, he found a German secretary of embassy, a lanky, fair-haired man, with a profile like a horse, and a parting down the back of his head, (that was the fashion at that time,) and . . . and, O wonders! who else? Von Dönhof, the very same officer with whom he had fought a few days back. He never for one moment thought he would meet him again, and particularly here. He was seized with a feeling of confusion; but he nevertheless bowed to him.

"You are already acquainted?" asked Maria Nikolaevna of Sanin, whose embarrassment had not escaped her notice.

"Yes, . . . I have already had the honor," said Dönhof. And bending toward Maria Nikolaevna, added, in an under-tone with a smile, "The same . . . a compatriot of yours, . . . a Russian."

"Impossible!" exclaimed she, also in a low voice, lifting her finger at him menacingly, and then shook hands with him and with the lanky secretary, who, from all appearances, was deeply smitten with her, as he even opened his mouth every time he looked at her. Dönhof retired almost instantly, with a look of amiable submission, and like a friend of the house, who understood by half a glance what was required of him. The secretary wculd have staid

.onger, but Maria Nikolaevna conducted him to the door without the slightest ceremony.

"Go to your captivating friend," she said to him, (there was a certain *principessa di Monaco* at that time at Wiesbaden, of a very fast reputation;) "why should you spend your time with such a plebeian as myself?"

"How can you say so, madame?" said the unhappy secretary with a tone of assurance; "all the *principessas* in the world . . ."

But Maria Nikolaevna was void of all pity, and the secretary withdrew.

She had dressed that day very becomingly. She had on a pink *glacé* silk dress, with sleeves *à la Fontanges*, and enormous diamond earrings. Her eyes sparkled as brilliantly as her diamonds, and she seemed to be in her best and brightest mood.

She placed Sanin next herself, and commenced conversing about Paris, whither she meant to go in a few days; next, how weary she was of the Germans; that they were silly when they tried to be clever, and were inappropriately clever when they made themselves silly; and then suddenly—*à bras pourpoint*, as the French say—asked him whether it was true that he had fought a duel about some lady, with this very same officer who had been sitting here a minute ago?

"How do you come to know that?" stammered the astonished Sanin.

"The earth is full of echoes, Dimitri Palovitch; nevertheless, I know you were right, a thousand times right, and you behaved like a knight-errant of the olden times. Tell me, was this lady not your affianced bride?"

Sanin knit his brows.

"Well, well, I shall not say a word more about it," said Maria Nikolaevna hurriedly. "It is an unpleasant subject; forgive me! Do not be angry!"

Polozoff appeared from out the other room with a newspaper in his hands. "What is it? Is dinner ready?"

"Dinner is ready immediately; but just see what I have

found in the *Northern Bee*. . . . Prince Gromoboi is dead."

Maria Nikolaevna raised her head.

"Peace be with him! Every year," she said, turning to Sanin, "in February on my birthday, he used to decorate my room with camellias. But even that did not make it worth one's while staying a winter in St. Petersburg. I suppose he must have been past seventy," she said to her husband.

"I should think so. There is a full description of his funeral. The whole court attended it; and here are some verses, composed by Prince Kovrishkin, on the occasion. Shall I read them to you? The prince calls him the 'counseling husband.'"

"No, don't read them. What counseling husband was he? He was simply Tatiana Urievna's husband. Come to dinner. The living think of the living. Dimitri Pao-lovitch, give me your arm."

The dinner, like that on the day before, was excellent, and went off very animatedly. Maria Nikolaevna told stories well—a rare gift in a woman, especially in a Russian. She was not choice in her expressions, and she attacked her countrywomen severely. Sanin was more than once driven to laughter by her bold and pointed jokes. Maria Nikolaevna hated hypocrisy, empty words, and lies. She met with it almost all over the world, and she boasted and glori-ed, as it were, in her own low origin; related some rather curious anecdotes of her parents, and called herself a peasant-woman, no worse than Natalia Kirilovna Naryshkin. It became pretty evident to Sanin that her experiences were far beyond those of hundreds of her cotemporaries.

Polozoff in the mean while ate his dinner and drank his wine thoughtfully and carefully, only occasionally casting his light-gray and seemingly dull but in reality penetrating eyes toward his wife or at Sanin.

"What a duck you are!" exclaimed Maria Nikolaevna, addressing her husband; "how well you fulfilled all my

commissions! I would kiss your dear little forehead; but you do not care for that sort of thing."

"Not care," answered Polozoff, and he cut a pine-apple in two with a silver knife. Maria Nikolaevna looked at him and beat her fingers on the table. "Does our bet still hold good?" she said significantly.

"Yes."

"All right; you will lose it."

Polozoff listened with an air of curiosity.

"Well, this time, however convinced you may feel, Maria Nikolaevna, it is my opinion that you will lose the bet."

"What is the bet about? may I know?" asked Sanin.

"No, . . . not yet," answered Maria Nikolaevna, laughing.

The clock struck seven. The waiter announced that the carriage was at the door. Polozoff conducted his wife to the drawing-room, and immediately betook himself to his arm-chair.

"Mind! Do not forget to write to the steward!" called out Maria Nikolaevna from the hall.

"I shall write, do not be uneasy; I am an orderly man."

XXXIX.

In the year 1840, the exterior of the theatre at Wiesbaden was very dilapidated, while the wretched mediocrity of its troop of actors did not rise an inch above the level which, even up to this time, may be considered the normal state of all German theatres, the perfection of which was lately represented by a troop of actors at Karlsruhe, under the celebrated directorship of Mr. Devrient. At the back of the box, taken for "her serene highness Mme. Von Polozoff" (heaven knows how the waiter had managed to get it —had he in reality bribed the governor?) behind this box was a small room fitted up with sofas; before entering it, Maria Nikolaevna begged Sanin to raise the screens which divided the box from the theatre.

"I do not wish to be seen," she said, "or else they will all come flocking in." She seated him next herself,

and turned her back to the theatre, so that the box might appear empty.

The orchestra struck up the overture to "Figaro's Marriage." . . . The curtain rose; the piece began.

It was one of those numerous homely productions, in which well-read but untalented authors introduced, in choice but lifeless words, carefully but unskillfully, some deep or heart-stirring idea, depicted a tragical conflict, and filled one with *ennui*. . . . Maria Nikolaevna listened patiently to half the act; but when the first lover discovered the treachery of his lady-love, (this lover was dressed in a brown coat with "puffs" and a velveteen collar, a striped waistcoat with pearl buttons, green trousers with patent-leather straps to them, and white chamois-leather gloves,) when this lover, pressing both his fists into his breast, howled exactly like a dog, Maria Nikolaevna could stand it no longer.

"The lowest French actor, in the lowest small provincial town, acts better and more naturally than the first German celebrity," she exclaimed with disgust, and went into the back-room. "Come here," she said to Sanin, tapping with her hand the place next herself on the sofa. "Let us have a gossip."

Sanin obeyed the summons.

Maria Nikolaevna looked into his face. "I see you are as soft as silk! Your wife will have an easy time of it. That jester," continued she, pointing with the end of her fan to the howling actor, (he was acting the rôle of a tutor,) "reminded me of my youth. I was also in love with a tutor. That was my . . . first, no, my second passion. The first time I fell in love with a chorister in the Donskoy Monastery. I was twelve years old at the time. I only saw him on Sundays. He wore a velvet under-cassock, scented himself with lavender, and when making his way through the crowd with his censer, said to the ladies in French, '*Pardon, excusez!*'—and never lifted his eyes, and his eyelashes were as long as that!" Maria Nikolaevna divided her thumb with the nail of her forefinger. "My tutor was called Monsieur Gaston! I must tell you that he was a very learned and stern man—a Swiss—and with

such an energetic countenance! His whiskers were as black as pitch, he had a Grecian profile, and his lips were as hard as though they were made of iron! I was afraid of him! This was the only man I have ever feared during my whole life. He was my brother's tutor—my brother who was drowned. A gypsy predicted that I would also die a violent death; but that is nonsense. I do not believe in that sort of predictions. Can you imagine Ippolit Sidoritch with a dagger?"

"One can die a violent death without being stabbed," observed Sanin.

"It is all nonsense! Are you superstitious? I am not. What is to be, will be. Monsieur Gaston lived in the house, and occupied a room above mine. I used to wake in the night and hear his steps above—he used to go to bed very late—and my heart would beat with love . . . or some other feeling. My father hardly knew how to read, but he gave us a good education. Are you aware that I understand Latin?"

"You? Latin?"

"Yes—I. Monsieur Gaston taught me. I read the *Aeneid* with him. It was heavy reading; but there are pretty parts in it. Do you recollect, when Dido and *Aeneas* are in the wood?" . . .

"Yes, yes, I remember," answered Sanin hurriedly. He had long forgotten his Latin, and had but a faint idea of the *Aeneid*.

Maria Nikolaevna looked at him with her head on one side and from beneath her eyebrows. "You do not think, however, that I am too learned. Ah! alas! no—I am not learned, and possess no talents. I can only just write—really; I can not read aloud; I do not play on the piano, nor do I draw nor sew: I can do nothing! You see me just as I am. I tell you all this," continued she, "firstly, not to listen to those fools, (she pointed to the stage where, at that moment, instead of an actor, there was an actress yelling and howling and sticking out her elbows,) and secondly because I am in your debt: yesterday you told me all about yourself."

" You wished me to do so," said Sanin.

Maria Nikolaevna turned suddenly on him. " And you do not wish to know what sort of a woman I am? But I am not surprised," added she, leaning back again on the sofa. " A man who is about to marry, and for love too, and after fighting a duel— How can he have a thought for any thing else ? "

Maria Nikolaevna became absorbed in thought, and nibbled at the handle of her fan with her pretty and regular teeth, which were as white as milk.

And Sanin again felt that vapor rising to his head—that vapor from which for these last two days he could not escape.

Their conversation was carried on in an under-tone, then in a whisper, and this irritated and troubled him still more. When would all this end ?

Weak people never give the final stroke—they always wait for the end.

Some one sneezed on the stage. This sneeze was introduced by the author of the piece as something comical; of course there was no other comical element in it, and the audience consequently took the opportunity of enjoying a little mirth.

The laughter also irritated Sanin.

There were moments when he positively did not know whether he was angry or glad, dull or amused! Oh! if Gemma could but have seen him!

" It is really odd," commenced Maria Nikolaevna again. " A man tells you most calmly, ' I am going to get married ; ' while no one would say calmly, ' I am going to drown myself ; ' and nevertheless, where is the difference ? Very odd, indeed."

Sanin was seized with vexation. " The difference is great, Maria Nikolaevna! Some have no fear in throwing themselves into the water: they know how to swim; and besides —as far as concerns queer marriages—if we are to speak of them—"

He suddenly paused and bit his lip. Maria Nikolaevna struck the palm of her hand with her fan.

"Finish what you were saying, Dimitri Paolovitch, finish—I know what you wanted to say; 'if we are to speak of them, my dear lady,' you were about to say, 'why, what can be queerer than your marriage? I have known your husband from childhood!' This is what you wished to say, you who know how to swim!"

"Allow me," began Sanin.

"Is that not true? Is that not true?" persisted Maria Nikolaevna. "Look me in the face, and tell me I have told an untruth!"

Sanin did not know where to turn his eyes. "Well, it is true, if you force me to say so," said he at last.

Maria Nikolaevna shook her head. "You are right. Well, and don't you wonder, you who know how to swim, what the reason could have been of such a strange—step on the part of a woman who is neither poor, nor void of sense, nor yet plain? Perhaps it does not interest you; but all the same, I shall tell you the reason; not now, but as soon as this act is over. I am in constant fear of some one coming into the box."

She had hardly uttered the last word, when the outer door was partially opened, and a red head, hot with perspiration, a head still young but toothless, with straight hair, a long nose, with large ears like a bat, with gold spectacles, inquisitive dull eyes, and with a *pince-nez* on the top of the spectacles, peered round the box, espied Maria Nikolaevna, smiled meaninglessly, and nodded to her.

Maria Nikolaevna waved him away with her handkerchief. "I am not at home! *Ich bin nicht zu Hause, Herr P—. Ich bin nicht zu Hause . . . sh! sh! sh!*"

The owner of the head looked astonished, forced a smile, and said with half a sob, in imitation of Liszt at whose feet he had once crawled, "*Sehr gut! sehr gut!*" and vanished.

"What kind of a creature is that?" asked Sanin.

"That? the critic of Wiesbaden. A literary man or *lohn lackei*, whichever you like. He is employed by people here who bribe him, and he is obliged to go into raptures over

every thing, while at the same time he is overflowing with spite to which he dares not give vent. I am afraid of him: he is a fearful gossip; he will immediately spread the report that I am in the theatre; but I do not care."

The orchestra played a valse, the curtain was lifted again. . . . The contortions and screechings recommenced on the stage.

"Well," began Maria Nikolaevna, dropping down on the sofa again, "as fate has thrown you here, and you are obliged to sit with me instead of basking in the smiles of your lady-love, . . . do not turn your eyes away or be angry. I can enter into your feelings, and have already promised to give you your freedom—but now listen to my confession. Would you like to know what I like best?"

"Freedom," suggested Sanin.

Maria Nikolaevna laid her hand on his.

"Yes, Dimitri Paolovitch," murmured she, and her voice resounded with unmistakable sincerity and gravity "freedom, above every thing and before every thing. And do not think that I make a boast of this—there is nothing praiseworthy in it—only such is the case, always was, and will be until I die. In my childhood, I must have seen a deal of slavery and suffered from it. And then Monsieur Gaston, my tutor, helped to open my eyes. Now, perhaps, you understand why I married Ippolit Sidoritch. With him I am free, quite free, as free as the air, as free as the wind. . . . And this I knew before my marriage. I knew that with him I should be as free as a Cossack!"

Maria Nikolaevna paused, and threw down her fan.

"I must tell you besides, that I am fond of reflection; . . . it is amusing, and our intellect was given us for that; but on the result of my own actions I never reflect, and when I am forced to do so, I show no mercy to myself—no, not a grain: it is not worth it. I have a saying, *cela ne tire pas à conséquence*. I do not know how to translate it. And, indeed, what does it matter about the result? No one will demand an account of me *here—below* while *there*," (she raised her finger on high,) "there

let them settle it as they know best. When they judge me there, I shall not be myself! Are you listening? Are you dull?"

Sanin was sitting with his head bent. He raised it. "I am not dull in the least, Maria Nikolaevna, and I am listening to you eagerly. Only, I must confess, I keep asking myself, why is it you tell me all this?"

Maria Nikolaevna moved a little on the sofa. "You ask yourself? Are you such a simpleton? Or are you so modest?"

Sanin raised his head still higher.

"I tell you all this," continued Maria Nikolaevna, with a calm voice, which did not quite agree with the expression of her face, "because you please me exceedingly; yes, do not look surprised; I am not in jest; because after having met you, it would grieve me to think that you should preserve a disagreeable recollection of me, or even, if not a disagreeable one—that I do not care about—but an incorrect one. For this very reason I enticed you here, and remain alone with you, and speak to you so frankly—yes, yes, frankly. I am not telling lies. And mind, Dimitri Paolovitch, I am quite aware that you are in love with another woman, and that you are about to marry her. Do justice to my disinterestedness! But, however, it is your turn to say, *cela ne tire pas à conséquence!*"

She burst out into laughter, but stopped suddenly in the midst of it, and remained motionless, as though her own words had struck her with amazement, while in her eyes, usually so bright and bold, there came a look of timidity and even sadness.

"The serpent! the serpent!" thought, meanwhile, Sanin; "but what a fascinating serpent!"

"Give me my *lorgnon*," said Maria Nikolaevna, all of a sudden. "I want to see whether that *jeune première* is really as ugly as she looks. Really, one would suppose that she had been engaged with a view to morality, to prevent young men from being too much attracted by her."

Sanin gave her the *lorgnon*, and she, while taking it from him, quickly caught hold of his hand with both her own.

"Do not look so serious," whispered she, with a smile "Do you know what: no one can enchain me, and I also place chains on no one. I love freedom and recognize no duties—not even to myself. But now, move a little aside and let us listen to the piece."

Maria Nikolaevna directed her glasses to the stage, and Sanin followed her gaze, sitting next her, in the dim light of the box, breathing, involuntarily breathing, the warmth and fragrance of her luxurious presence, and just as involuntarily turning over in his mind all that she had told him during the evening, especially during the last few minutes.

XL.

The piece lasted yet another hour, but Maria Nikolaevna and Sanin soon ceased looking at the stage. They again entered into conversation, and this conversation took the same turn as before; only this time Sanin was less silent. In his heart he was angry with himself and with Maria Nikolaevna; he strove to prove to her the fallacy of her theories, as though she could be amused with theories! He began disputing with her, at which she secretly rejoiced: "if he disputes," thought she, "it means, he is either giving in or will give in. He is nibbling at the bait, and is getting tamer!" She answered him, laughed, acquiesced, meditated, attacked him . . . meanwhile his face and her face drew closer together, and his eyes turned no longer away from hers. . . . Those eyes seemed to be riveted to his face, and he smiled, though respectfully, to them in return. It was already a point gained that he allowed himself to be diverted, and launched out into discussions on the honesty of mutual relations, on the duties and sacredness of love and marriage. . . . This was already a step made in advance. . . . It was a good starting-point. . . .

Persons well acquainted with Maria Nikolaevna declared that when this timidity, softness, and almost maidenly coyness—although it was puzzling to know where it all suddenly came from!—took possession of this hard and power-

ful nature . . . then . . . yes, then matters had taken a dangerous turn.

They were evidently now taking that turn with Sanin. . . . He would have been seized with a feeling of contempt for himself, had he collected his thoughts but for one moment; but he had no time either to analyze his feelings or to reproach himself.

But she took advantage of every moment; and all this arose from his being so good-looking! . . . One may well say, "How can one know where he will gain and where he will lose?"

The drama came to an end. Maria Nikolaevna begged Sanin to throw her shawl over her, and she never moved from her seat until he had folded it over her queenly shoulders. Then she took him by the arm, and went out into the corridor—and almost screamed; at the very door, and like a ghost, stood Dönhof; while from behind him peered the despicable face of the Wiesbaden critic. The greasy face of this "literary man" beamed with spite.

"Allow me, madame, to find you your carriage," said the young officer, with ill-concealed tremulous passion in his voice.

"No, thank you," answered she, "my servant will find it. Stay!" added she in a tone of command, and passed on quickly, leading Sanin away.

"Go to the devil! What have you stuck to me for?" said Dönhof to the literary man. "He was forced to break his heart for some one!"

"*Sehr gut! sehr gut!*" mumbled the critic, and disappeared in the crowd.

Maria Nikolaevna's servant soon found the carriage; she sprang into it lightly, and Sanin followed her. The door was shut, and Maria Nikolaevna burst into a fit of laughter.

"What are you laughing at?" asked Sanin, with curiosity

"Oh! I beg your pardon, . . . but the idea struck me, what if Dönhof s'ould call you out again . . . on my account . . . would it not be queer?"

"And do you know him intimately?" asked Sanin.

"Him? That boy? He does my errands for me. Do not be uneasy!"

"I am not in the least uneasy."

Maria Nikolaevna sighed. "Ah! I know you are not concerned. But listen—you know what: you are so good, you must not refuse me this my last wish. Do not forget that in three days I am going to Paris, and you return to Frankfort. . . . When shall we meet?"

"What is your wish?"

"Of course you know how to ride?"

"Of course."

"Well, then, to-morrow morning I shall take you with me, and we shall go out of town. We shall have splendid horses. Then when we return, we shall finish our business, and say Amen! Do not look astonished; do not tell me this is a caprice; that I am out of my mind; all this may be true—but only say, I consent!"

Maria Nikolaevna turned her face to him. It was dark in the carriage, but her eyes sparkled in the darkness.

"Yes, I consent," murmured Sanin with a sigh.

"Ah! you sigh!" said Maria Nikolaevna, imitating him.

"This is what that means, the wine is poured out and one has to drink it. But no, no. . . . You are charming, you are very amiable—but your promise I keep. You have my hand without a glove, my active right hand. Take it, and believe in the sincerity of its pressure. What sort of a woman I am, I do not know; but I am an honest creature, and to be trusted."

Sanin, without hardly accounting to himself for his own action, raised her hand to his lips. Maria Nikolaevna drew it gently away—suddenly ceased speaking, and was silent until the carriage stopped.

She rose to leave the carriage. . . . What was that? Was it in fancy or in reality, that he had felt on his cheek that sudden burning touch?

"Until to-morrow!" whispered Maria Nikolaevna to him on the staircase, in the full blaze of four candelabras, which the gorgeous porters had instantly lit on her arrival. She kept her eyes bent on the ground. "Until to-morrow!"

Returning to his room, Sanin found a letter lying on the table, from Gemma. He was seized with a feeling of sudden fear, and then tried to rejoice, in order quickly to disguise this fear from himself. The letter consisted of a few lines. She expressed her joy at hearing that his affairs had commenced so well, advised him to be patient, and added that all were well at home, and they were rejoicing in advance at his return. Sanin found her letter rather curt and dry; nevertheless, he took a pen and a sheet of paper . . . then threw them both down. What shall I write about? I shall be there myself to-morrow . . . it is time I should, it is time!"

He hurried to his bed, and tried to fall asleep quickly. If he had remained up, his thoughts would have assuredly dwelt on Gemma, and for some reason or other . . . he was ashamed to think of her. His conscience pricked him. But he so laced himself by thinking that to-morrow all would be at an end forever, and that he would part from this empty, frivolous woman, never to meet again—and would forget all this absurd nonsense! . . .

Weak-minded people, when arguing with themselves, willingly use energetic expressions!

Et puis . . . cela ne tire pas à conséquence!

XLI.

Thus thought Sanin when going to bed at night; but what his thoughts were on the following morning, when Maria Nikolaevna knocked impatiently at his door with the coral handle of her whip, when he beheld her on the threshold of his door with the train of her dark-blue riding-habit thrown over her arm, with a small chimney-pot hat on her thickly plaited hair, with a veil floating over her shoulders, with a radiant smile on her lips, in her eyes, on her whole face—what his thoughts were then history does not reveal.

"Well? Are you ready?" cried a gay voice.

Sanin buttoned up his coat and took his hat in silence.

Maria Nikolaevna cast a bright look on him, nodded her head, and skipped down-stairs. He followed her.

The horses were standing ready before the door. There were three: there was a golden brown thoroughbred mare, with black fiery eyes starting from its head, with the legs of a stag, and rather lean, but still a handsome, spirited-looking animal, for Maria Nikolaevna; a powerful, broad, rather heavy-looking steed, and black as the night, for Sanin; the third horse was for the groom. Maria Nikolaevna sprang lightly into her saddle. . . . The animal began to paw the ground and turn about, whisking its tail, and champing the bit; but Maria Nikolaevna was a first-rate rider, and knew how to keep the horse in check. She had yet to take leave of Polozoff, who, in his inseparable fez and dressing-gown appeared on the balcony waving his handkerchief, with a frown on his face. Sanin also leaped on his horse; Maria Nikolaevna waved her whip at Polozoff, as a sort of farewell to him, and then hit her horse over the neck: the animal rose on its hind legs, bounded forward, then quietly walked off at a measured pace, quivering in all its veins, breathing the wind, and snorting impatiently. Sanin rode behind and watched Maria Nikolaevna: with an air of assurance, her small elegant form swayed easily and gracefully to and fro with every movement of her horse. She turned her head round and beckoned to him with her eyes. He rode up to her side.

"Well, you see how pleasant it is," she said. "I tell you, once for all, before we part: you are charming, and you will never repent of this ride."

Having uttered these words, she nodded her head several times, as though to confirm what she had said, and to make him understand the significance of her words.

She seemed so immeasurably happy that Sanin could scarcely believe it; there came over her face that expression of perfect happiness which children have when they are very, very contented.

They went at a slow pace as far as the barrier, and then set off at a gallop along the *chaussee*. The weather was perfectly lovely; the wind blew against their faces and

whistled pleasantly round them ; a feeling of youth, health, and freedom took possession of them both, and gained upon them each moment.

Maria Nikolaevna drew in her horse, and went again at a slow walk ; Sanin followed her example.

"For this," she began, with a deep, rapturous sigh, "for this alone would life be worth having : when one has gained one's wish, a wish that seemed beyond one's reach, one must enjoy it with all one's soul ! And how good one feels at the time ! For instance I . . . how good I feel ! I think I could embrace the whole world. That is to say, no, not the whole world ! There—this one I could not embrace." She pointed with her whip to an old beggar walking along the side of the road. "But I am ready to make him happy. There, catch it," she called out in German, throwing her purse at the beggar's feet. The old man looked astonished, and stood still, while Maria Nikolaevna laughed aloud, and sent her horse at a canter.

"You enjoy riding ?" asked Sanin, overtaking her.

Maria Nikolaevna again drew her horse in with a sudden jerk ; she never stopped differently : "I only wished to escape from the old man's gratitude. Who thanks me spoils my pleasure. I did not do that for him, but for myself. How dares he thank me then ? I did not hear what you said just now."

"I was asking you . . . I wished to know why you are so happy to day ?"

"You know what," murmured Maria Nikolaevna : either she did not again hear Sanin, or else thought it unnecessary to answer his question. "I am so tired of seeing that groom, who is pursuing us, and who is probably wondering when we shall turn back. How shall we get rid of him ?" She took from her pocket a small memorandum book. "Shall I send him with a letter into town ? No . . . that will not do. Ah ! I know now ! What is that in front of us ? An inn ?"

Sanin looked in the direction to which she pointed. "Yes, it looks like an inn." "That is splendid. I shall

order him to remain at the inn, and to drink beer until our return."

"But what will he think?"

"What do we care! But he will not think any thing about it; he will drink beer, and that is all. Well, Sanin (this was the first time that she had spoken to him so familiarly), come on, let us gallop!"

When they had ridden up to the inn, Maria Nikolaevna called the groom, and told him what he was to do. The groom, a man of English extraction, put his hand up to his hat, jumped off his horse, and caught hold of the bridle.

"Well, now we are birds of freedom!" said Maria Nikolaevna. "Whither shall we go? North, South, East, or West? See, I am like a king of Hungary at his coronation" (she pointed to all four quarters of the globe). "All is ours! You know what: do you see those beautiful hills and that wood? Let us go there, to the hills, to the hills!"

"'In die Berge, wo die Freiheit thront!'"

She turned off from the *chausse*, and galloped along a narrow, unbeaten road, which seemed to lead to the hills. Sanin galloped after her.

XLII.

This narrow road soon turned into a footpath, and at last disappeared altogether, intersected by a ditch. Sanin thought it advisable to return, but Maria Nikolaevna said, "No, I want to go to the hills! Let us go as straight as a bird flies," and she made her horse jump over the ditch. Sanin jumped over it also. On the other side was a meadow, which soon proved to be a bog; the ground was thoroughly soaked, and there were small pools of water all over the place. Maria Nikolaevna rode her horse purposely through all the pools, laughing, and repeating at the same time, "Let us be school-children!"

"Do you know what it is to hunt in the bogs?" she said to Sanin.

"Yes," he answered.

"My uncle kept hounds," continued she, "and I used

to go out hunting with him in the spring. So delightful And now here we are together in the bogs ! I see you are a thorough Russian, and yet you want to marry an Italian. Well, it is your look out ! What is this ? Another ditch ? Jump !"

The horse jumped over, but Maria Nikolaevna's hat fell off her head, and her hair streamed over her shoulders. Sanin was about to get off his horse to lift the hat, when she called out to him, " Do not touch it, I shall get it myself," and bending low from her saddle, caught hold of the vail with the end of her whip, got the hat, put it on, left her hair hanging down her back, and set off again with a cry. Sanin rushed off with her, side by side; jumping the ditches, the fences, the rivulets, scrambling out of difficulties together, tearing up and down hill, and always gazing into her face. And what a face it was ! it seemed as transparent as the day : those eager, wild, bright eyes were opened wide ; those lips and nostrils were also opened and were inhaling greedily the morning air. She was gazing straight before her, and it seemed that all she looked at, the earth, the heavens, the sun, and the very air, her soul yearned to possess, and her only regret was, that there were so few dangers—she could have overcome any thing. " Sanin," she cried, " this is like Bürger's Lenore, only you are not dead. Tell me, you are not dead ? . . . I am alive !" All her wild nature had come into play. This was no longer an Amazon tearing along, this was a young female Centaur, half beast, half goddess, and the peaceful earth she sped over in her wild impetuosity, gazed at her in amazement.

Maria Nikolaevna at last drew in her foaming horse : it was staggering under her, while Sanin's was panting for want of breath.

" Well ? Is not this delicious ?" she said in a bewitching whisper.

" Delicious !" echoed Sanin in ecstasy, and his blood rushed wildly through his veins.

" Wait a bit : this is not what it will be !" She stretched out her hand. The glove on it had burst.

" I told you I should take you to the woods, to the

hills. . . . There are the hills!" Covered with a high wood, they rose about two hundred paces from the spot from whence these bold riders now emerged. "See, and here is the road. Let us follow it, and go on. Only ride at foot's pace. We must let our horses take breath."

They rode on. Maria Nikolaevna threw back her hair with a sudden, quick movement of her hand. She then looked down at her gloves, and took them off. "My hands will smell of leather," she said, "but you will not mind that? Eh?" Maria Nikolaevna was smiling, so was Sanin. This wild ride had seemingly brought them together at last and made them friends.

"How old are you?" she asked him suddenly.

"Twenty-two."

"Impossible! I am also twenty-two. It is a happy age. Put those years together, and old age will still be far distant. But how warm it is! Am I very red?"

"As red as a poppy!"

Maria Nikolaevna wiped her face with her handkerchief. "When we get into the wood it will be cooler. An old wood is like an old friend. Have you any friends?"

Sanin thought a few moments. "I have . . . but only a few. Real friends I have none."

"I have real ones, only they are not old. One's horse is also a friend. What care it takes of one. Oh! but how delicious it is here! Can it be possible that I am going to Paris to morrow?"

"Yes . . . can it be possible?" repeated Sanin.

"And you to Frankfort?"

"I am positively going to Frankfort."

"Well, God be with me! But this day, at all events, is ours . . . ours . . . ours!"

The horses neared the skirt of the wood and entered it. The wide shadows of the trees fell softly over them from all sides.

"Oh! but this is paradise!" exclaimed Maria Nikolaevna. "Come deeper, farther into this shadow, Sanin."

The horses advanced slowly, "deeper into the shadow,"

staggering slightly and panting. The path they were following suddenly took a turn and went off into a narrow defile. The scent of juniper, ferns, pine-trees, and of last year's withered foliage, filled the spot with a dense, dreamy atmosphere. The big brown stones emitted from out their clefts a delicious freshness. Small low hillocks, overgrown with green moss, skirted the path on each side.

"Stand still," exclaimed Maria Nikolaevna, "I wish to sit down, and rest on this velvet carpet; help me to dismount."

Sanin got off his horse and ran up to her. She leaned on his shoulders, jumped quickly to the ground, and sat down on one of the mossy hillocks. He stood before her, holding the horses by their bridles.

She raised her eyes to him. . . . "Sanin, do you know how to forget?"

Sanin recollected what had happened in the carriage the night before: "What is this—a question or a reproach?" he said.

"I have never reproached any one. But do you believe in sorcery?"

"In what?"

"In sorcery. In the kind of witchery we sing of in our peasant songs? I believe in it . . . and so will you."

"Sorcery" . . . repeated Sanin. "All is possible in this world. At first I did not believe in it, but now I do. I do not recognize myself."

Maria Nikolaevna became pensive and then looked around her. "This place seems familiar to me. Look, Sanin, is there not behind that big oak-tree a red wooden cross?"

Sanin stepped aside to see. "There is."

Maria Nikolaevna smiled pleasantly and laughed. "Ah, well! I know where we are. We have not yet lost ourselves. What is that noise? Is it the woodman's axe?"

Sanin looked into the thicket. "Yes; there is a man there chopping down the dry branches."

"I must arrange my hair," said Maria Nikolaevna, "or else, seeing me in this plight, he might think it odd." She

took off her hat and began silently and solemnly plaiting the ends of her long tresses. Sanin stood before her. . . . The outline of her perfect form was plainly visible from beneath the dark folds of her habit, to which small tufts of moss were clinging here and there.

One of the horses behind Sanin suddenly shook himself. Sanin started and trembled involuntarily from head to foot. All was in confusion within him—his nerves were like the chords of an instrument overstrained. He was quite in earnest when he said he did not recognize himself. . . . Verily, he was bewitched. His whole being was breathing with but one thought, one wish. Maria Nikolaevna threw a piercing glance at him.

"Well, now my hair is as it should be," she murmured, putting on her hat. "You do not rest yourself. Sit here. No, wait a bit, do not sit down. What is that?"

A dull vibrating sound passed over the tops of the trees and through the air.

"Can that be thunder?"

"It sounded like thunder," answered Sanin.

"Oh! but this is a holiday, a real holiday! We only wanted this to complete it. Bravo! *Bis!* Do you remember, I spoke to you yesterday of the *Aeneid*? They were also caught in a storm in the wood. However, we must make a start." She jumped to her feet. "Lead me up my horse. . . . Give me your hand for my foot. That is it, I am not heavy." Like a bird she flew on her saddle. Sanin also mounted his horse.

"You are going home?" he asked in a quivering voice.

"Home?" she answered hesitatingly and gathering up her reins. "Follow me," she said in a commanding voice and almost harshly.

She rode into the path, and passing the red cross, went into the hollow, came to the turn, took the road to the right, and again ascended the hill. . . . She evidently knew her way, and this way led farther and farther into the depths of the wood. She never uttered a word, never turned her head: she went on with an imperious air, and he followed her, obediently and humble, without a spark of his

own free-will left in his sinking heart. Drops of rain began to fall. She urged on her horse, and he kept up with her. At length, from between the dark-green fir-trees, and from beneath the ridge of a gray rock, they caught sight of a wretched little watch-house, with a low door in its thatched wall. . . . Maria Nikolaevna made her horse scramble through the thicket, and suddenly dismounting at the threshold of the door, turned to Sanin and whispered: "Æneas?"

Four hours later, Maria Nikolaevna and Sanin, attended by the sleepy groom, returned to Wiesbaden to the hotel. Mr. Polozoff met his wife with a letter to his steward in his hand. Looking closely at her, an expression of dissatisfaction stole over his face, and he muttered, "What, have I then lost my bet?"

Maria Nikolaevna only shrugged her shoulders.

That same day, two hours later, Sanin stood before her in his own room, like one lost and ruined. . . .

"Where are you going to?" she asked him. "To Paris or to Frankfort?"

"I shall go where you go, and shall be with you until you send me away from you," he answered in despair, pressing his lips to the hands of his conqueror. She released her hands, placed them on his head, and grasped his hair with all her fingers. Then she drew them gently through his hair, standing over him erect with triumph on her lips—and her eyes wide and bright, bore but one expression—that of pitilessness and satiety. A vulture clawing his prey has just such eyes.

XLIII.

These were Dimitri Sanin's recollections, when, in the quiet of his own room, looking over his old papers, he found

among them the garnet cross. The events narrated here appeared vividly 'n succession before his mental vision. . . . But when he recalled the moment when with humiliatiing supplication he appealed to Madame Polozoff, when he gave himself up to her, when his slavery commenced—he turned away from these images that he had revived, and would recall no more. Not that his memory failed him—oh! no! he knew, he knew too well, what followed, after that moment; but he was choked with shame even now, so many years after it had happened; he dreaded that feeling of unbearable contempt for himself, which, he had no doubt, would most assuredly break over him like a wave, and drown all other feelings within him, if he did not bid silence to his memory. But turn from these vivid reminiscences as he would, to stifle them entirely was beyond his power. He remembered the trashy, tearful, lying, piteous letter he sent to Gemma, the letter that was never answered. . . . To appear before her, to return to her after such deceit, such treachery—no! no! he had some conscience, some honor still left in him. Besides, he had lost all confidence in himself, all self-respect: he dared no longer answer for himself. Sanin also recollectcd how he afterward—O ignominy!—despatched Polozoff's servant to Frankfort for his things; how cowardly he felt; how one idea alone pursued him—to fly quickly to Paris; how he, in obedience to Maria Nikolaevna's commands, sneaked and made up to Ippolit Sidoritch, and even made himself amiable to Dönhof, on whose finger he saw exactly such another ring as Maria Nikolaevna had given him!

Next followed reminiscences still viler, still more shameful. . . . The waiter hands him in a card, and on it is written the name of Pantaleone Cippatola, Court Singer to H. S. H., the Duke of Modena! He hides from the old man, but can not avoid encountering him in the passage; and there rises before him an agitated face from under a heavy, gray tuft of hair; the eyes burn like coals, and he hears terrible ejaculations and cursings: "*Maledizione!*" He even hears the dreadful words: "*Codardo! Infame traditore!*" Sanin closes his eyes, throws his head

back, turns away again and again ; but again he sees himself seated on the narrow front seat of a traveling carriage . . . opposite, sit Maria Nikolaevna and Ippolit Sidoritch —four horses dash at a canter along the Wiesbaden streets —to Paris ! to Paris ! Ippolit Sidoritch is eating a pear, which he, Sanin, had peeled for him ; while Maria Nikolaevna gazes at him, and smiles at him, who is already firmly shackled and secured, with that familiar smile—the smile of ownership and sovereignty. . . .

But, good God ! there at the corner of the street, not far from the entrance of the town, is that not Pantaleone standing ; and who is that with him ? Can it be Emile ? Yes, it is he, it is that enraptured, devoted boy ! was it not but a short time ago, that his young heart glowed before his hero, his ideal, and now his pale charming face—so attractively charming that Maria Nikolaevna noticed him and looked out of the carriage window at him—that honest face flushes with anger and contempt ; his eyes, so like those other eyes ! pierce through Sanin, and the lips are compressed . . . and open suddenly to cast angry words at him. . . .

And Pantaleone stretches out his hand, and points out Sanin—to whom ? to Tartaglia who stands next him, and Tartaglia barks at Sanin, and the very bark of that honest dog resounds with unbearable mortification. . . .

And then, the life in Paris, all the humiliations, all the odious torments of a slave, to whom the pangs of jealousy and murmurs are not permitted, and who is discarded, at last, like an old shoe.

Then, the return to his own country ; a poisoned, wasted life ; trivial troubles and turmoil ; bitter and fruitless repentance ; as fruitless and as bitter forgetfulness ; invisible but perpetual punishment, however slight, but still incurable pain—repayment, in small remittances, of a debt too heavy to calculate. . . .

The cup was filled to the brim—enough !

How was it that the cross which Gemma had given

Sanin was still in existence ; why had he not returned it now had it so happened he had never, before that day come across it ? Long, long, did he remain wrapt in thought, and though taught by experience, after so many years, he was still unable to comprehend how he could ever have forsaken Gemma, whom he had loved so tenderly and so passionately, for a woman for whom he had never had a grain of love ? . . . On the following day, he astonished all his friends and acquaintances by announcing to them that he was going abroad. Society was perplexed with wonder. Sanin was leaving Petersburg in the middle of winter, after having only just taken an elegantly furnished apartment, and a box at the Italian opera, at which Mme. Patti was singing ! His friends and acquaintances were struck with astonishment ; but it is not in the order of nature for people to trouble themselves long with affairs that do not concern them, and when Sanin went abroad, the only one who came to see him off at the railway station was a French tailor, with the hopes of settling his little bill—“*pour un saute-enbarque en velours noir, tout à fait chic.*”

XLIV.

Sanin told his friends that he was going abroad, but he did not tell them the exact place he was going to : our readers easily guess that he went direct to Frankfort. Thanks to the general spread of railways, he reached his destination in four days' time. He had not visited the town since the year 1840. The “White Swan” stood in its old place and flourished, though it was no longer considered a first-class hotel. The Zeil, the principal street at Frankfort, was but little changed ; but not only the Roselli house, but the whole street had disappeared entirely. Sanin wandered, like one out of his senses, about the places so familiar to him once upon a time, and recognized nothing : the former buildings were gone ; they were exchanged for new streets, lined with enormous, closely-packed houses and elegant villas ; even the public garden, where Gemma and he had had their last, long interview, was so overgrown and

changed, that Sanin asked himself whether this indeed was the same garden? What was he to do? How and where was he to make inquiries? Thirty years had elapsed since then. . . . It was no easy matter to find out. Not one person to whom he turned had ever heard the name of Roselli; the landlord of the hotel advised him to inquire at the public library, there he would find all the old newspapers; but what good that would do him, the landlord himself was unable to explain.

Sanin, at last driven to despair, made inquiries about Herr Klüber. That name was well known to the landlord, but even here he met with a disappointment. The elegant clerk, having raised himself to be a capitalist, became a bankrupt and had died in prison. . . . This intelligence caused him no great grief. He came to the conclusion that this journey had been a rash undertaking. . . . But one day, turning over the leaves of the Frankfort Book of Addresses, he came across the name of Von Dönhof, a retired major. He instantly took a carriage and drove off to him, though why should this Dönhof be exactly the same Dönhof he once knew; how should Dönhof be able to give him any news of the Roselli family? But what matters: does not a dying man catch at a straw?

Sanin found the retired Major Von Dönhof at home, and in the white-haired old man who received him he recognized his former opponent. And the Major also knew him again, and was glad to see him: it reminded him of his youth, and of his youthful follies. Sanin heard from him that the Roselli family had long since removed to America, to New-York; that Gemma had married a merchant; that, moreover, he, Dönhof, was also acquainted with a merchant who probably knew the address of her husband, as he had business connections with America. Sanin begged Dönhof to go to this acquaintance, and, O joy! Dönhof brought him the address of Gemma's husband, Mr. Jeremiah Slocum, New-York, Broadway No. 501. Only this address was of the year 1853.

"Let us hope," exclaimed Dönhof, "that our former Frankfort belle is still alive and has not left New-York

But by-the-by," added he, lowering his voice, "what has become of that Russian lady, you recollect, who was staying at Wiesbaden, a Mme. Bo—Von—Bozoloff—is she still alive?"

"No," answered Sanin, "she is dead long ago." Dönnhoff raised his eyes, but observing that Sanin had turned away with a frown, did not say another word, and left him.

That same day, Sanin sent a letter to Mrs. Gemma Slocum, New-York. In this letter he told her that he was writing from Frankfort where he had come with the sole purpose of finding her out; that he was thoroughly aware to what extent he had forfeited the right of expecting an answer from her; that he had not merited her forgiveness, and only hoped that, in the midst of happy surroundings in which she lived, she had long since forgotten his existence. He added, that he had come to the determination of reminding her of himself in consequence of a chance circumstance which had awakened the past too vividly; he told her of his solitary joyless life, entreated her to understand the reasons that had induced him to turn to her; not to let him carry to his grave the grievous consciousness of his fault, long suffered for but unforgiven, and to gladden him if only by a few words telling him how she lived in that new world, in which she had disappeared. "By writing me but one word," thus wrote Sanin at the end of his letter, "you will be doing a good act worthy of your great soul, and I will thank you with my last breath. I am staying here at the '*White Swan*' (he underlined these words), and shall wait for your answer until spring."

He sent this letter off and waited. Six whole weeks he lived at the hotel, scarcely ever leaving his room, and seeing no one. No one could write to him from Russia or from elsewhere: if a letter did come, he knew it could only be the one he was expecting. He read from morning to night, not the papers, but serious books, and historical essays. These prolonged readings, this silence, this snail-like, hidden

existence, just suited his strain of mind: if only for that alone he was indebted to Gemma! But was she alive? Would she answer him?

At last there came a letter, with an American post-mark, from New-York, and addressed to him. The hand-writing on the envelope was English. . . . He did not recognize it . . . and his heart sank within him. He could not break the seal at once. He looked at the signature. It was Gemma. The tears started to his eyes: that she had signed herself without her surname was alone a pledge of reconciliation and forgiveness! He unfolded the thin, blue note-paper, a photograph slipped out. He lifted it quickly and stood struck with wonder. It was Gemma, the living image of Gemma, as young as he had known her thirty years ago! The same eyes, the same lips, the same type of face; on the back of the photograph was written: "My daughter Marianna." The whole letter was kind and simple. Gemma thanked him that he had not hesitated in writing to her, and that he had such confidence in her; she did not conceal from him that, after his desertion of her, she had suffered terrible anguish, but added immediately after, that, in spite of all, she considered her meeting with him to have been a great happiness, as it had prevented her from becoming the wife of Herr Klüber, and it had led, though indirectly, to her marriage with her present husband, with whom she had lived for twenty-eight years in perfect happiness and in luxury. Their house was well known in New-York. Gemma informed Sanin that she had five children, four sons and one daughter of eighteen, who was already engaged, and whose photograph she inclosed, as it was the general opinion that she was very like her mother. The sad news she reserved to the last. Frau Lenore had died at New-York, where she had followed her daughter and son in-law; but she had had time to rejoice her heart over her grandchildren and to nurse them. Pantaleone also was going over to America, but died just before his departure from Frankfort. "And Emilio, our tenderly loved Emilio, perished gloriously, fighting for the freedom of his country in Sicily, amongst

the thousands commanded by the great Garibaldi. We all deeply deplored the loss of our precious brother, but, while shedding tears, we felt proud of him, and we shall ever feel so and ever preserve his memory sacred!" Then Gemma expressed her sorrow that Sanin's life had been so unhappy; she hoped he would at last find peace and rest for his soul, and said she would be glad to see him, though she knew how improbable it was that they would ever meet again. . . .

We do not take upon ourselves to describe the feelings of Sanin while reading this letter. Such feelings can not be expressed: they are too deep and too strong, and too far beyond the reach of words. Music alone could convey the meaning of them.

Sanin answered the letter immediately, and sent, as a present to the bride—to "Marianna Slocum, from an unknown friend"—a small garnet cross, mounted richly in pearls. The present, though very valuable, did not ruin him; in the course of those thirty years which had passed since his first visit to Frankfort he had accumulated a considerable fortune. In the first days of May, he returned to St. Petersburg, but not for long. There is a rumor that he is selling all his estates and is going over to America.

A LEAR OF THE STEPPE

A LEAR OF THE STEPPE.

ONE winter evening we were assembled, a half-dozen of friends, in the rooms of one of our old university-comrades. The conversation had turned on Shakspeare and his astonishing creations, of the profound and puissant energy with which he has seized each type of character in the very heart of nature. But above all we wondered at their astounding truth ; each of us naming an Othello, a Hamlet, a Falstaff, even a Richard III. and a Macbeth — though these last, of course, only hypothetically — among his acquaintance. "And I, gentlemen," said our host, "I have known a King Lear."

"How so?"

"I will tell you." And he commenced his story.

I.

My childhood and early youth were passed in the country on an estate of my mother's, who was a wealthy proprietress in the province of X. The most striking impression that I retain of that time, now long ago, is that of the figure of our nearest neighbor, one Martin Petrovich Kharlof. And indeed it would have been strange if this impression had faded, for never in my life

have I seen any one like him. Imagine a man of gigantic stature, with a monstrous head planted, a little awry, and with no visible neck, upon a colossal body. This head was covered with a mass of yellow hair, a little grizzled, descending almost to his bushy eyebrows. From the vast expanse of the face, reddened by constant exposure to cold and wind, rose a large flattened nose, between two small blue eyes of a haughty and defiant expression. His mouth was small, and seamed with wrinkles all around; and the voice which issued from it was at once hoarse and sonorous, reminding one of the strident clangor made by a truck-load of bars of iron hauled over a rough pavement. Kharlof always spoke as if he were addressing some one on the other side of a ravine in the teeth of a strong gale. It is not easy to define the exact expression of his face, for the reason that it was difficult to embrace the whole of it in a single glance; but the impression made by it was not, on the whole, disagreeable. There was even a certain grandeur about it; it was only too strange and extraordinary. What arms the man had, and what legs! and hands like great cushions! I remember that I could never contemplate the vast back of Kharlof, and his shoulders like two mill-stones, without a sort of respectful terror. But what most astonished and confounded me were his ears. Standing out on each side of his enormous cheeks, they reminded me, with their long scroll-like margins, of the great twisted and rolled cheeses, called *kalachi*, which are so common in Russia. Summer and winter, Kharlof wore a sort of gabardine of greenish cloth, bound at the waist by a Circassian belt, and tarred boots. I never saw a cravat on him: in fact what could he have tied it around?

He breathed heavily and slowly, like an ox, and walked without noise. You fancied that when he was once in a room, he was under a continual apprehension of throwing down or breaking everything in it: he moved with precaution, sideways, and with a sort of gliding motion. His herculean strength commanded the respect of the whole neighborhood, and was the subject of legends. It was

reported that on meeting a bear in the woods one day, he had grappled and killed him single-handed and unarmed ; that having caught a thieving peasant among his bee-hives, he had pitched him over the hedge, and his horse and cart after him — and much more of the same sort. But Kharlof himself made no boast of his strength. If he was full of pride, it was not of his physical powers, but of his birth, his worldly position, and the wit and intelligence for which he gave himself credit. "Our race," he often said, "springs from the Shwede [he meant Swede] Kharlus, who came to Russia in the reign of Ivan Vassilich the Blind. This Shwede Kharlus did not deign to be a pagan count, but wished to be a Russian gentleman, and he had himself registered in the Golden Book. That is the source of our origin, we Kharlofs ; and that is why we are all light-haired, with light clear eyes and white faces, for we sprouted under the snow." "But, Martin Petrovich," I ventured to say to him one day, "there never was an Ivan Vassilich the Blind. There was an Ivan Vassilich the Terrible ; but it was the Grand-Duke Vassili Vassilich who was surnamed the Blind." "Stuff !" calmly responded Kharlof ; "when I say a thing is so, so it is."

One day my mother happened to compliment him on his disinterestedness, which really was extraordinary. "Eh, Natalia Nicolavna," he cried, almost contemptuously, "that is a great thing to praise any one for ! Great lords like us, how can we act in any other way ? It must never be that any man of the soil, any peasant or churl, should even suspect us of anything mean or contemptible. I am a Kharlof : my family comes from there" — and he lifted his finger toward the ceiling as high as he could reach — "how can I think about my own interest?"

Another time a personage of some distinction who was on a visit to my mother, took it into his head to quiz Kharlof, and when he spoke of "the Shwede Kharlus who came to Russia"—

— "in the time of the Czar Haricot,"* interrupted the visitor.

*A legendary personage.

"No, it was not in his time, but under the reign of the Grand-Duke Ivan Vassilich the Blind."

"For my part," replied the other, "I think that your race runs back to a far more ancient date, to the antediluvian times when the earth produced mastodons and megatheriums."

Though these scientific names were words in an unknown tongue to Kharlof, he knew perfectly well that he was being made fun of.

"It may be so," he remarked dryly, "for our race is really of great antiquity. They say that at the time when my ancestor came to live in Moscow there was living there a fool of the same sort as your Excellency, and that fools of that kind only appear in the world once every thousand years."

The visitor arose, furious ; Kharlof flung his head back, thrust forward his chin, gave a kind of snort of defiance, and moved proudly away.

Two days later he came back to our house. My mother began to remonstrate with him on his conduct. "I wished to give him a lesson, Madame," interrupted Kharlof. "Another time he will take care how he talks. He is young yet, and must be taught to walk straight." In reality the visitor was quite as old as Kharlof; but this giant seemed to look upon all other men as minors ; and besides, he had no fear of mortal man.

My mother always received Kharlof with especial kindness, and excused much in him, for he had once saved her life by checking her carriage on the edge of a ravine over which the horses had already fallen. The traces and the harness broke ; but Kharlof had clutched the wheel in time, and never loosened his grasp, though the blood sprang from under his nails. It was to my mother, too, that he owed his marriage. She gave him for a wife an orphan-girl of seventeen, whom she had brought up in her own house, he being then forty. Kharlof's wife was exceedingly small : a story ran that he had carried her to the bridal chamber on the palm of his hand. She did not long survive her marriage, but died, leaving two

daughters. After the death of his young wife my mother continued her friendly relations with Kharlof. She placed his elder daughter in the government institution for girls of noble birth, then married her, and she had already a husband in her eye for the younger.

Kharlof was a good farmer ; he had enlarged his estate to three hundred *deciatines*, and erected on them the necessary farm-buildings. As for the obedience of his peasants, I need not attempt to describe it.

Large and heavy as he was, Kharlof never went anywhere on foot ; the earth, he said, could not bear him. He kept a little *drosky* (kind of bench on four low wheels) and drove himself. The animal he drove was a lean and decrepit old mare, who had on her shoulder the scar of a wound received at the battle of Moskowa, and was lame on all four legs at once ; she could not go in a walk, and far less in a gallop, but shambled along in a kind of rickety trot. She used to eat the wormwood and thistles in the fields, which I have never seen any other of the horse kind do before or since. It was a matter of ever new amazement to me how such a jade, not more than half alive, could drag such an enormous weight ; for I really can not venture to mention how many *poods* our neighbor was commonly reported to weigh.

On the *drosky*, behind Kharlof's back, used to be perched his little Cossack Maximka, his bare feet planted on the hind-axe, and his face and body leaning against his master's loins, in which position he looked like a bit of twig, or some extraordinary species of bug, that had accidentally attached itself to that enormous mass. This little Cossack shaved Kharlof twice a-week ; to achieve which operation he mounted on a table, and the wags used to say that he had to run to get round his master's chin.

Kharlof did not like staying in the house, and so was constantly met going about in his famous equipage, holding the reins in one hand, and the other planted on his knee, with the elbow well forward. An old and surpassingly dilapidated cap was stuck on the crown of

his head, and under it he turned from side to side his little eyes like a bear's, as he saluted with a sonorous voice all the peasants, tradesmen, or towns-folk whom he met on the way, or hurled energetic oaths at the priests, whom he could not bear. One morning when I had gone out with my gun, he met me, and catching sight at the same moment of a hare squatting beside the road, he let loose such a "Ware!" that I had a ringing in my ears all the rest of the day.

I have said that my mother received Kharlof with friendliness. She was not ignorant of the deep respect he entertained for her. When he spoke to her he called her his benefactress; and she saw in him a kind of devoted giant, who in case of need would not hesitate to confront a whole army of peasants in revolt; and though such a collision was not in the least to be feared, still my mother, who had been left a widow while quite young, thought that such a defender was not to be despised, when, moreover, he never borrowed money, never drank, and if he lacked education, was by no means lacking in intelligence. When she determined to make her will, it was Kharlof whom she selected as her first witness, and he went to his house expressly to get his spectacles; monstrous iron utensils, round, like drosky-wheels, without which he could not write. Even with his spectacles, it took him a quarter of an hour of puffing and groaning before he achieved the signature of his name and titles, in enormous square letters, adorned with tails and flourishes. After accomplishing this task he complained of fatigue, and remarked that for him writing, or catching fleas, was pretty much the same thing.

Despite all the regard which my mother displayed to him, he was never allowed to go beyond the dining-room, as he diffused an odor which reminded one of freshly-dug earth, of the pungent scent of forests, or of the mud of morasses. "He is a real *lechi*," (wood-goblin) said my old nurse. When he dined with us, a table was set for him in a corner; nor did he take this amiss, for he comprehended that he would have been in the way of his neighbors, and

found it himself more comfortable to eat in entire freedom, for he ate as no one, I imagine, has eaten since the days of Polyphemus. By way of precaution, and to stay his stomach, they always first set before him a pot containing about six pounds of *kacha*, a sort of buckwheat-porridge. "But for this porridge, you would eat me," my mother would say to him, laughing; and he would laugh and answer, "You are quite right, my benefactress; I would eat you."

My mother always liked to hear his views on any question of domestic economy, but they were always briefly expressed. He neither liked nor was able to discourse at length. "Long stories make one short-winded," he used to say scornfully. It was only when one got him on the subject of the year 1812 (when he had served in the militia, and had been decorated with a bronze medal which he wore on holidays), and questioned him about the French invasion, that he told two or three anecdotes, and always the same ones.

Who would have supposed that this indestructible and self-reliant giant had his moments of melancholy and gloom? Yet so it was. With no apparent cause, a profound depression took possession of him. He shut himself up in his chamber, where sometimes he hummed to himself, producing as much sound as a whole hive of bees, and sometimes called his Cossack Maximka, and ordered him to sing something, or to read in the only book that had ever found entrance into his house, Novikof's *Workman at Rest*.* Maximka, who, strange to say, could scramble through the words after a fashion, set to reading at the pitch of his voice, blundering, and putting his accents pretty much at random; or else in a shrill falsetto he intoned some dismal canticle, of which the words were unintelligible. Kharlof shook his head slowly, made observations on the fragility of all earthly things, and remarked that all would return to dust like the grass of the field. He had hung up in his chamber an engraving

*A periodical collection, published in Moscow, 1785. The author, Novikof, was the chief of the Illuminati of the school of Saint-Martin.

representing a lighted candle surrounded by great puffy-cheeked creatures who were blowing at it with all their might ; and under it was the legend : "Such is human life." When the hour of gloom had passed away, he turned this picture with its face to the wall. Kharlof, this colossus, stood in mortal fear of death ; and yet, even in his moments of deepest gloom, he never prayed.

Kharlof, to tell the truth, was not very devout : he rarely went to church. He used to say himself that his bodily dimensions forbade it : that he took up the room of too many of the faithful. But these attacks usually terminated in the following way : he began to whistle, and then in a voice of thunder ordered his carriage to be brought out. A few minutes later he would be seen trundling about the country, and flourishing his whip-hand above his old cap, as who should say, "The world is ours!" After all, he was a Russian.

Persons of great physical strength are usually of a phlegmatic temperament ; but Kharlof on the contrary was very easily enraged. But no one had the gift of exasperating him in such perfection as the brother of his deceased wife, a fellow named Bitschkof, a grotesque kind of creature, half parasite and half buffoon, who lived with us, and who from his childhood had been called Souvenir by everybody, even by the servants, who contented themselves by adding to it his patronymic of Timofeich. I believe that he had himself forgotten his baptismal name. This sorry creature, whom everybody felt himself entitled to despise, and who, by the way, had lost all the teeth of one side, so that his lean face appeared twisted, was always in motion, slipping in everywhere, now in the servants' hall, then in the priests' house, and presently into the bailiff's office. Of course he was always driven away, whenever caught, at which he only humped his shoulders, winked his squinting eyes, and laughed his villainous cackling laugh, which sounded like rinsing out a bottle. I always thought that if Souvenir had had money, he would have been a great scoundrel, for he was both immoral and cruel ; but happily he had

none. He was only allowed to drink on holidays ; and my mother, with whom he took a hand at piquet or boston in the evening, took care that he should be decently clothed.

He used to call Kharlof his "little brother," and tormented him to that extent that he "made him eat the bitter radish," as our peasants say. One day when Kharlof was in our billiard-room, a vast apartment in which no one had ever seen a fly, for which reason our neighbor, a great enemy of sunshine and warmth, greatly affected it, Souvenir began to hop and wriggle about him, saying with many grins and grimaces, "Little brother, what made you kill my sister Margarita Timofeievna?" Kharlof, who was sitting between the wall and the billiard-table, could no longer restrain himself ; and thrust out both his large fists at him. Happily for Souvenir, he dodged in time, but his brother-in-law's fists came into contact with the heavy billiard-table, and the six screws which held it to the floor snapped all at once.

For a long time I had had a curiosity to see Kharlof's house, and observe with my own eyes what kind of a habitation he had fabricated for himself ; so one day I proposed to accompany him on horseback as far as Jeskovo, for so he called his estate.

"Do you hear this chap?" cried Kharlof, "he wants to see my kingdom. Well, come along ; I will show you the house and the garden and the barn and everything ; I have a lot of fine things there." We started. From our castle to Jeskovo it was about three versts. "There's my kingdom," he said presently, turning his heavy head with difficulty toward me, and waving his hand to right and left,—"all that belongs to me."

Kharlof's dwelling was on a hill. Below it a few miserable huts clustered, as if they were glued together, along the margin of a pond. Standing on a plank, an old peasant-woman was pounding with all her might on some garment which she had just wrung out. "Axinia!" cried Kharlof in so formidable a voice that a flock of crows flew up out of a neighboring rye-field, "is that your husband's breeches you are washing?"

The old woman turned as stiffly as if she had been a piece of wood, and made him a low curtsey.

"Ah yes, little father, it is his breeches," she mumbled in a cracked voice.

"You had better get at something else," Kharlof roared back.

"There, look," he continued, addressing himself to me as we trotted along a ruinous bit of wall, "there is my hemp, and this other is the peasants'. Do you see the difference? And here is my garden: I planted these apple-trees and those willows myself. Before my time there was not a single tree here. Learn how to manage, youngster."

We entered a court-yard surrounded with palisades. Fronting the carriage-gate stood a rickety old cabin with a thatched roof, and a little flight of stairs, resting on wooden posts, running up to the door. Another cabin, somewhat newer and ornamented with a garret, was on the other side of the yard, and looked to my eyes as if it also, to use our country-phrase, stood on chicken-legs.

"Do you see," said Kharlof, "in what huts our fathers lived? And now see what a palace I have built myself."

This palace of his looked like a child's card-house. Five or six dogs, each one shaggier and uglier than the other, rushed out to greet us, barking furiously.

"These are shepherd's dogs," said Kharlof, "of the true Crimean breed. Hold your tongues, you cursed brutes!" he roared; "for much I would hang the whole lot of you."

A young man, dressed in a long nankeen coat, appeared on the stairs of the new house: this was the husband of the elder daughter. He made one bound to the drosky, and while with one hand he respectfully supported Kharlof's elbow, he extended the other as if to support his enormous leg, as the latter dismounted from the drosky as he would from a horse. The young man then came to assist me to dismount.

"Anna," cried Kharlof, "Natalia Nicolavna's son has honored us with a visit; we must give him some breakfast. Where is little Evlampia?"

Anna was his elder daughter; Evlampia the younger.

"She is not in the house: she went out into the fields to gather bluets," said Anna, opening a window beside the door.

"Are there any curds?" asked Kharlof.

"Yes."

"And cream too?"

"And cream."

"Very good: set it all out. In the meantime I will show him my cabinet. Come this way," he added, beckoning me with his finger. In his own house he no longer used the familiar *thou*:* he considered that as his guest I was entitled to a more respectful address. He conducted me along a corridor —

"Here is where I live; this is my cabinet," he said suddenly, entering a large door: "Welcome in."

It was a large bare room, not plastered, so that the beams and other anatomy of the wall were exposed to sight. On great nails, driven in at random, hung two whips, an old cocked-hat, a flint-lock gun, a sabre, a pumpkin, a curious horse-collar ornamented with copper plates, and the famous engraving of the lighted candle exposed to all the winds. In a corner was a sort of wooden divan, covered with a bit of bright-colored carpet. Thousands of flies kept up a droning buzz under the ceiling. It was cool and airy in this room, but the sort of wild smell which Kharlof carried with him everywhere, seized one by the throat.

"Is not my cabinet handsome?" he asked.

"Beautiful," I replied.

"Look at this Dutch collar," he went on, "it is a real curiosity. I got it in trade from a Jew. Examine it closely."

"It is a very handsome collar, certainly."

"There is none better for wearing. Just smell it. What leather!"

I smelted the collar, but could perceive nothing remarkable except a rather strong odor of rancid tallow.

*Omitted in the translation.—Tr.

"Come, sit on this little chair and make yourself at home," Kharlof went on. And taking a seat on the divan, he closed his eyes and seemed to fall asleep. I looked at him steadily, and could not withhold my wonder: the man was like a mountain.

Suddenly he shook himself: "Anna!" he cried in his voice like the lowing of an ox, and his vast stomach rose and fell like a wave of the sea—"Anna! did you not hear me? Why do you not make haste?"

"All is ready, if you will please to come," replied the voice of Anna from a distance.

Surprised at the celerity with which his orders had been obeyed, I followed him to the dining-room, where on a table covered with a red cloth with white figures, the breakfast was spread; curds, cream, cheese-cakes, and even powdered sugar mixed with cinnamon. While I was eating some of the curds, Kharlof fell asleep again, sitting in a corner. Motionless before me, with down-dropped eyes, stood Anna Martinovna, and through the window I could see her husband, who was leading my horse up and down the yard, rubbing in his hands the curb-chain which he had taken off the bridle.

My mother did not like Kharlof's elder daughter, whom she thought proud. Anna Martinovna never came to pay her respects to us; and when in my mother's presence her expression was cold and reserved, although it was through her kindness that she had received her education at the Institute, that she had found a husband, and that on her marriage-day she had a thousand rubles as a portion, and a yellow cashmere shawl, not much the worse for wear.

Anna was a woman of middle height, rather thin, quick and active in all her movements, with a splendid mass of long brown hair, and a rather pleasing face of a complexion inclining to olive, with which her longish eyes, of a pale blue, made a singular but not unpleasing contrast. Her nose was finely formed and straight, her chin sharp and prominent. Any one on seeing her would have said to himself—clever and malicious.

Taken altogether, her person was attractive ; and the points of beauty in her face heightened the effect. Standing before me, her hands hidden beneath her handkerchief, she was secretly watching me. A little malicious smile lurked about her lips, her cheeks, and the corners of her eyes. "A spoiled slip of nobility," was what this smile seemed to say. Whenever she spoke, it was with a slight dilation of the nostrils.

And yet with all, if Anna Martinovna had been willing with her thin and rather compressed lips to give me a kiss, I could have jumped to the ceiling with joy. I knew that she was severe, exacting, and that the wives and daughters of the peasants stood in mortal dread of her. It made no difference : to look at Anna Martinovna made my heart beat; but then I was fifteen years old.

Kharlof gave himself another shake. "Anna," he said, "rattle us off something on the piano ; young gentlemen like music."

I turned my head, and observed in a corner a wretched-looking implement that seemed to belong to the piano species.

"With pleasure, father," replied Anna, "only what can I play for the gentleman ? He will not care for it."

"What did they teach you at the Institute, then ?"

"I have forgotten it all. And besides, the strings are broken." Anna's voice had a peculiar, not unpleasant quality, sonorous and slightly plaintive, like the cry of a bird of prey.

"Well then," said Kharlof, "then,—will you come look at my barn ? It is well worth seeing. Volodka* will go with you. Ho ! Volodka !" he cried to his son-in-law, who was still walking my horse in the yard, "take the gentleman to the barn and everywhere ; show him everything. As for me, I must take a nap. *Au revoir !*"

He went out and I followed. At once Anna, rapidly, and as it were contemptuously, began to clear the table. At the door I turned and made her a low bow ; she did not seem to observe it, and only smiled, more maliciously

*Diminutive of Vladimir.

than before. I took my horse from her husband's hands, and led him by the bridle. We went to see the barn ; but as there was nothing there of particular interest, and as my guide could not suppose that a boy of my age cared much about farming matters, we crossed the garden to get on the road.

Vladimir Slotkine was an orphan, the son of a man of low birth who had been my mother's business agent. She had first put him at the district school, then given him employment in our bailiff's office. Later he got into the commissary department of the government, and finally had married Kharlof's daughter. My mother used to call him a little Jew ; for with his crisp frizzled hair, his large black eyes, always moist-looking like cooked prunes, his hooked nose, and his thick red lips, he presented the exact type of that Oriental race. Otherwise his complexion was fair, and he might pass for a quite good-looking fellow.

Vladimir was a very serviceable person where his own interests did not conflict. His intense avidity of gain sometimes almost deprived him of his senses, and often wrung tears from his eyes. He could never bear for there to be any delay in the fulfilment of any promise made to him ; if there were, he trembled with anger, he groaned with anguish. He liked to prowl about the country with a gun ; and when he knocked over a hare or duck, he crammed them into his pouch with a peculiar expression, patting them with his hand as if to say, "I have you now ; you can't get away now."

"What a nice little horse you have there," he said in his lisping, drawling voice, as he helped me into the saddle. "That is the kind of horse I should like to have : but no such luck for me. I wish you would please speak to Madame your mother and remind her"—

"Did she ever promise you one?"

"Ah, no—Oh, if she had only promised ! But I was thinking that perhaps, since she is so generous"—

"Why do you not go to Martin Petrovich ?"

"To Martin Petrovich !" repeated Slotkine, dragging out every syllable. "Why, good heavens, you have no

idea how stingy he is to me. We are not nearly paid for the work we do."

"Is that so?"

"I swear it to you. So soon as he has said—'My word is sacred,' it is as if anything you had to say was chopped off with a hatchet. And then he does not love Anna Martinovna, my wife, like his other daughter Evlampia." Here interrupting himself, he smote his thigh in desperation, crying, "Why, great heavens, some robber has cut down half a quarter of an acre of our oats! Just look at it! The scoundrels! the brigands! A ruble and a half, two rubles will not cover the damage!" I could hear the sobs in his desperate exclamations. I gave my horse the spur, and left him planted there, ejaculating and bemoaning.

His lamentations were still in my ears, when at a turn in the road I met Kharlof's second daughter, who had gone, her sister said, to gather bluets. A garland of these flowers surrounded her head. We exchanged salutations in silence. Evlampie was not less handsome than her sister, but in an entirely different style. Tall of stature, and strongly built, all about her was large, her head, her limbs, her hands, her snow-white teeth, and especially her eyes, which were a little prominent, of a deep blue, and over-drooped by rather heavy eyelids. This monumental virgin was palpably Kharlof's daughter. Her braid of blond hair was so long that she wound it three times round her head. Her mouth was charming, of a brilliant red, and fresh as a rose. When she spoke there was an innocent sort of lifting of her upper lip, such as we see in children; but there was something wild and almost fierce in the look of her slowly-moving eyes. "She is an untamed one—Cossack blood," Kharlof used to say. In truth this colossal beauty rather intimidated me, and reminded me too much of her father.

I kept on my way. Evlampie began to sing in a monotonous voice, strong, and rather harsh, a real peasant-girl's voice. Presently she stopped abruptly. I looked back, and from the top of the hill on which I was, I could see

her standing by her brother-in-law, at the place where the oats had been cut. He was talking and gesticulating ; she stood contemptuously calm, the sun casting a brilliant light on her form, and brightening the garland of wild flowers which she wore on her head.

I think I mentioned before that my mother had an eye on a husband for this other daughter of Kharlof. It was one of our poorest neighbors, a half-pay major named Gavrilo Gitkof, a man of mature age, and as he used to say himself with a sort of pride, "beaten and broken." He could barely read and write ; but he cherished the secret hope of being one day general manager of my mother's property, for he felt in himself the genius of an executor of orders.*

"For other matters," he used to say, "I make no boast ; but as for counting the teeth in the peasants' heads, I have that science in its very last refinement. It is in the army that I served my apprenticeship to that art."

If Gitkof had been less stupid and self-conceited, he might have seen that he had not the slightest chance to supersede the existing manager, a certain Lizinski, a Pole of great intelligence and firmness of character, in whom my mother had the highest confidence. Gitkof had a long face like a horse, covered with a yellowish down which started just below his eyes, and even in the severest cold his face was moist with fine drops of sweat. At the approach of my mother he assumed the attitude of a soldier standing before his officer, his head quivered with zeal, his great hands dangling at the seams of his trousers twitched with readiness, and his whole person seemed to say, "Command, and I fly !" My mother was under no illusion whatever as to the means of this personage ; but this did not hinder her from scheming a marriage between him and Evlampia. "But how will you get on with her, little father ?" she said to him one day.

Gitkof smiled with a confident air. "Why, Natalia Nicolavna," he said, "I have commanded a whole bat-

*The great quality in requisition under the Emperor Nicholas. With that, one might arrive at anything.

talion, and marched them as if it had been on a thread. To make a woman march, is that anything to talk about?"

"There is a difference, father," she replied with an air of dissatisfaction, "between a battalion of recruits and a young girl of noble blood. However," she added after a moment's reflection, "Evlampia will know how to take care of herself."

II.

One night — it was in June, and rather late — Kharlof was announced at our house. My mother was surprised. We had not seen our neighbor for more than a week, and he never visited so late. "Something must have happened," she murmured. And in truth Kharlof, who had sunk upon a chair by the door, was so pale, and his face wore so anxious an expression, that she could not refrain from repeating at the sight of him her former exclamation.

"What is it, father? speak!" she exclaimed. "Has your melancholy seized you again?"

Kharlof knitted his brows. "No, it is not my melancholy: that always comes at the full moon. But allow me to ask you a question, Madame: what are your thoughts about death?"

My mother started — "Why do you ask that?"

"I have just had a nocturnal hallucination," said he slowly, in a deep, hollow voice.

"What?"

"A nocturnal hallucination," he repeated: "I am a great seer of dreams."

"You are?"

"I am. Did you not know it?" Kharlof heaved a sigh. "Listen. It happened a little more than a week ago; it was the eve of St. Peter's. I lay down to rest a little, and fell asleep. Suddenly I saw a black colt enter the chamber. This colt began to caper and show me his teeth — a colt black as a *tarakan*.*

* A gigantic kind of cockroach.

Here Kharlof paused. "Well?" said my mother.

"Well, the colt turned and gave me a kick on the left elbow, there, where it is tender. I awoke, and found that I had lost all use of my left arm—and of my left leg as well. Good, said I to myself, this is paralysis. But little by little movement and feeling returned, but I felt as if ants were running all over my joints, and they are running yet. So soon as I open my hand they begin to run."

"But, Martin Petrovich, you must have been lying on your arm; that is the secret of it all."

"No, Madame, that is not it, though you are so good as to say so. It is a warning that I have received—a warning of my death. And therefore this is what I wish to say to you, Madame, without losing an instant. Not being willing," Kharlof went on, at the full pitch of his voice, "that this death shall take me unprepared, I, being God's servant, have made up my mind to this: to divide in my life-time, at once, all my goods and substance between my two daughters, Anna and Evlampia, in such wise as the Lord may inspire me to do." Here he paused, gave a groan, and added, "Without the loss of a moment!"

"Well, the idea is not unreasonable," said my mother, "only it seems to me that you are in too great a hurry."

"And as it is my desire," Kharlof went on, still at the top of his voice, "to observe in this affair all proper and legal order, I have the honor to request your son, Dmitri Semenich—as for you, Madame, I would not venture to trouble you—I request the aforesaid Dmitri Semenich—and as for my kinsman Bitschhof, I command him as his duty—to be present at the consummation of the formal act and the enfeoffment of my two daughters, Anna, married, and Evlampia, single; which act shall be accomplished on the day after to-morrow, at the twelfth hour of the day, at my domain of Jeskovo, with the participation of the authorities at present in office, who have already received the proper notification."

Kharlof had obviously much difficulty in getting through this long tirade, which he had evidently learned by heart,

and the recital of which had been interrupted by frequent sighs and groans. He seemed not to have air enough in his lungs. His face, at first pale, had become crimson, and from time to time he wiped away the sweat which stood on his brow.

"Have you drawn up the act of donation?" asked my mother. "How did you have time?"

"Oh, I found time—I neither ate, drank, nor slept"—

"Did you write it yourself?"

"Volodka helped me."

"Have you presented your application?"

"I have presented it. The government court has granted permission, and the tribunal of the district has received the order, and the temporary delegation of the said tribunal has appointed the day of its arrival."

My mother smiled. "I see that you have taken all necessary measures, Martin Petrovich. But in what haste you have acted. It would seem that you have not spared money."

"I have spared nothing, Madame."

"Well, it is your own affair. Only, why did you say that you came to consult with me? However, it is all well; Dmitri can go. And I will send Souvenir, and tell Lizinski to be there. Have you not invited Gavril Fedoulitch?"

"Gavril Fedoulitch—the *sieur* Gitkof—has also been notified by me. He comes—as my future son-in-law."

Kharlof had now evidently exhausted the last reserve of his eloquence. And I fancied that I noticed that he seemed anything but pleased when he named the husband whom my mother had chosen for his younger daughter. It may have been that he was thinking of a more desirable match for his dear little Evlampia.

He rose slowly from his chair. "I thank you greatly for your kind consent," he said.

"Where are you going?" asked my mother. "Wait and I will give you some breakfast."

"Thanks," replied Kharlof, "but I cannot: I must now go home." He moved backward towards the door, and was turning sideways, as usual, to go through it—

"Wait a moment," said my mother. "And you really give all your property to your daughters without any reservation?"

"Assuredly; without the least reservation."

"And where do you propose to live?"

Kharlof gave a flourish of his arms. "Where I shall live? Why at home, as I have always lived. Where else did you suppose?"

"Are you so entirely sure of your daughters and your son-in-law?"

"Is it of Volodka that you speak—that dish-rag? I shall make him march as I please, you may be sure. What can he do? And as for my daughters, they bind themselves to provide me meat and drink, fire, lodging and clothes for the rest of my life. Is it not their natural and most sacred duty?"

"It is their duty, of course. But, Martin Petrovich, you must excuse me—your eldest daughter is full of pride; every one knows that; and as for your youngest, she has a wolf's look."

"Natalia Nicolavna," cried Kharlof, "what are you saying? Good God! What? my daughters—fail in their duty to me! They would not even dream of such a thing. What? resist—a father? And their curse—would it tarry long? They have passed their whole lives in trembling and submission—and for them—all at once—great God!" A violent paroxysm of coughing seized him: my mother attempted to calm his excitement.

"The only thing is," she said, "that I can not understand the necessity of being in such haste. After your death they will have everything. I suppose that your melancholy has brought you to this idea."

"My little mother," he said, not quite appeased, "you are always casting up my melancholy to me. It may be an influence from on high that is moving me at this moment, and you—talk of my melancholy. I have resolved on an immediate division, Madame, because I wish myself, in my own person, in accordance with my own decision, to fix and determine from this time what

shall go to each of them ; and that each of them, after receiving my bounty, may feel gratitude and faithfully carry out what has been determined by her father and benefactor, for it is an extraordinary act of favor." Here Kharlof's voice changed. "I have the honor to wish you good night. As for you, Sir, I shall have the honor of receiving you at my house the day after to-morrow."

With these words Kharlof took his leave : my mother watched his departure and shook her head.

"It is an affair that promises no good," she murmured, "no good. Did you notice," she went on, addressing me, "that all the while he talked he kept blinking his eyes as if the sun was shining in them? It is a bad sign. When a man does that, it is a sign that he has a weight upon his heart — that evil is threatening him. Go there the day after to-morrow with Lizinski and Souvenir."

On the day appointed our great family carriage, drawn by six sorrel horses, and driven by our head coachman, a kind of corpulent patriarch with a long gray beard, drew up majestically at the *perron* of our mansion. The importance of the act which Kharlof was about to perform, and the solemnity of his invitation, had not been without their effect upon my mother. She had herself ordered the great coach, only used on occasions of ceremony ; and she recommended Souvenir and myself to go in full dress to do the more honor to our protégé. As for Lizinski, he always wore a black coat and white cravat.

A half-hour had not elapsed, and our horses, going at a stately trot, had scarcely moistened with sweat the bright straps of their harness, when we reached Kharlof's house. The great carriage-gate was standing wide open, and our vehicle rolled into the court. The postillion of the two leaders, a child of five or six, whose feet hardly reached below the saddle, gave for the last time his shrill "Look out!" ; our patriarchal coachman's two elbows rose together as he drew the reins, and we halted.

No dog saluted us with the accustomed barking : the numerous children of the work-people whom we used to see tumbling about the yards in little shirts with wooden

crosses slung round their necks, had disappeared. Kharlof's son-in-law was waiting to receive us at the door. Young birch-trees had been planted on each side of the steps, as is the custom on Trinity-Sunday. Everything had a solemn appearance. Kharlof's son-in-law had on a great cotton-velvet cravat with a satin bow, and a black coat very much too tight for him. The little Cossack Maximka had saturated his hair with *kvass*, by way of pomade, to that extent that drops were running down his cheeks. We entered the great room, and there found Kharlof, upright and immovable in the centre. He had on his militia-coat of 1812, gray cloth with a black collar. On his breast hung a bronze medal, and a sabre was girt to his side, on the hilt of which his left hand reposed, while his right rested on a packet of papers placed on a table covered with red cloth.

Kharlof did not move—he scarcely seemed to breathe. No words can express the solemnity of his appearance and attitude, which seemed to bespeak the consciousness of unlimited, absolute power. He scarcely saluted us with a movement of the head; then indicating by a slight gesture a row of chairs, he said in a curt voice, "Be seated."

His two daughters were on the right side of the room, dressed out in their best, Anna in a green dress with yellow belt, Evlampia in a rose-colored dress with cherry ribbons. Gitkof was standing by them in a bran-new uniform, with his usual expression of eager and foolish watchfulness. On the left was seated the priest, an old man clad in a long, threadbare, snuff-colored *riassa*. His coarse stiff hair, his dull and melancholy eyes, his great knotted hands lying heavily upon his knees, the cracked boots which were visible beneath his cassock, all bore witness to a life of toil and hardship: his parish was extremely poor. By his side sat the *ispravnik* (chief of police of the district), a little fat pale man, with short arms and legs, thin moustaches turned up, and a constant smile, but with an evil expression about the eyes and mouth. He passed for a great wine-bibber, and even for

a tyrant, as they used to say in those days. And yet not only the gentlemen, but the peasants themselves, at last got used to him, and even almost to like him. He turned his eyes from side to side with a humorous expression : the whole proceeding seemed to cause him internal amusement, but in reality he was only tickled at the prospect of a good breakfast washed down with plenty of brandy. On the other hand, his neighbor the procurator, a tall thin man with a meagre visage crossed by whiskers running from his nose to his ears, seemed to look upon the whole ceremony with a deep and solemn interest ; and his eyes never quitted the master of the house. Souvenir took his seat by his side, and began to whisper in his ear, after having first informed me in a whisper that he was the free-mason of the highest rank in the whole province. I sat next to Souvenir, and Lizinski next to me. On the face of the busy Pole was read the annoyance he felt at this disturbance and this useless waste of time. "Oh, these Russians, these Russian nobles with their ridiculous whims and notions !" his countenance seemed to say.

When we were all seated, Kharlof erected himself to his full height, cast a haughty look upon the assemblage, heaved a sonorous sigh, and began thus :—

"I have invited you here, gentlemen, for the following purpose :—I am growing old ; infirmities are increasing upon me ; I have already received a warning, and the hour of death, as you all know, cometh upon us as a thief in the night. Is that not so, father ?" he asked, addressing the priest.

"It is truly spoken," replied the other in a cracked voice, shaking his beard.

"In consequence whereof," Kharlof continued, suddenly raising his voice, "not being willing that this death shall take me unprepared, I, being God's servant"—and he repeated word for word the long exordium that he had recited two days before to my mother. "Conformably therefore to the decision I have taken," he went on, raising his voice still higher, and smiting with his hand the papers lying on the table, "this formal act has been

drawn up, the competent authorities have received due notification, and you are about to hear, point by point, all my will. I have reigned long enough."

Kharlof now placed upon his nose his great iron spectacles, and taking one of the papers from the table, began to read as follows :—

"Act of Partition of the estate and goods belonging to Martin Kharlof, formerly corporal, and gentleman of ancient lineage, drawn up and executed by himself in the plenitude of his faculties, and of his own free will, wherein are determined with exactitude the portions bestowed upon his two daughters, Anna and Evlampia — Salute!" — the two made each a low reverence — "and in what manner the serfs and other chattels shall be divided between his two daughters aforesaid, *manu propria*" —

"That document is his own especial composition," said the *ispravnik* to Lizinski, with his eternal smile. "He wants to read it to us for the beauty of the style. As for the legal act, it is drawn up in due form, and without all these flowers of rhetoric." Souvenir began to grin.

"Yes, but conformably to my will!" cried Kharlof, who had overheard the remark.

"Doubtless, doubtless, in every point," replied the latter, in a tone at once obsequious and impertinent. "But you know very well, Martin Petrovich, that we cannot dispense with the form, and also that we have cleared away all superfluous details; for the court cannot under any circumstances enter into this long rigmarole of spotted cows and top-knot ducks."

"Come here, you!" cried Kharlof to his son-in-law, who had slipped behind us, and was standing in a humble attitude by the door. He bounded to his father-in-law's side. "Take this and read it; it would fatigue me."

Slotkine took the paper in his hands and began to read the act in a clear though tremulous voice, and with visible emotion. The portions of the two sisters were set down with the most exact minuteness. From time to time Kharlof interrupted the reading, saying, "Mark that, Anna, that is in reward of your dutiful conduct," or,

"That is a present for you, my little Evlampia." The two sisters made each a reverence—Anna bending down to her girdle; Evlampia only bowing her head, while Kharlof regarded them with an imperturbable gravity.

The "seigniorial mansion"—the new house that is to say—was given to Evlampia as the youngest daughter, and according to the ancient custom. The voice of the reader seemed to stick in his throat as he pronounced these disagreeable words, while Gitkof ran his tongue over his lips. Evlampia looked sideways at him: the disdainful expression which she had, like all Russian beauties, had acquired additional intensity. Kharlof reserved for himself the right to retain the apartments he was then occupying, and presented to himself, under the name of a dotation, "a complete supply of all things necessary," and ten rubles per month to keep him clothed and shod. Finally he desired to read himself the last sentence, which was his personal composition.

"Let this paternal will," it ran, "be fulfilled as if it were a law of heaven, for, under God, I am their father and lord, and have no account to render to any one of my dealings toward them, as I have never rendered any. If my daughters fulfil my will, my paternal benediction shall be upon their head; if they fulfil it not—which may God forbid—my curse shall smite them, now and forever, and to all eternity!"

Kharlof raised the paper and held it aloft. At this moment Anna threw herself on her knees before him, and struck the ground with her forehead. Her husband flung himself down and grovelled at her side. "And thou?" said Kharlof to Evlampia. She reddened and bowed herself also to the earth. Gitkof bent himself to a right angle, spreading out his arms.

"Arise," said Kharlof, "and sign here"—pointing to the bottom of the paper—"here, *I thank and I accept, ANNA; here, I thank and I accept, EVLAMPIA.*"

The two young women arose and signed. Slotkine also rose and was about taking the pen to sign, but Kharlof thrust his fore-finger in his cravat and flung him away

with such force that it gave him an attack of hiccups. Silence followed for about a minute. Kharlof let a sob escape him, and then moving to one side, he said in a hollow voice, "Now all is yours." His daughters and his son-in-law exchanged looks, and then drawing near, kissed him on the arm, between the elbow and shoulder.

The *ispravnik* read in a loud voice the legal act; then, accompanied by the procurator, he went out upon the steps and announced the transaction to the sworn witnesses, to Kharlof's peasants, and to the servants. And now came the act of taking possession on the part of the two new proprietresses, who came out also upon the steps, and to whom the *ispravnik* pointed from time to time as, frowning prodigiously, and giving to his naturally careless face a menacing expression, he indoctrinated the peasants in the duty of obedience. Certainly he might have spared himself this task; for I do not think that the whole world contained faces more humble and more shaped to submission than those of Kharlof's peasants. Clad in patched caftans and ragged pelisses, but with the loins tightly girt with their belts, as is customary on every solemn occasion, they stood immovable as statues of stone, and whenever the *ispravnik* cried out, "Do you understand, devils? Do you comprehend, demons?"—they made a low bow all together. Each of these demons and devils held his cap with both hands against his breast, and kept his eyes rivetted on the window through which could be seen the form of the master. The neighbors, assembled as sworn witnesses, seemed to feel no less terror.

"Do you know," cried the *ispravnik*, "any impediment to prevent these two daughters and heiresses of Martin Petrovich from taking possession?" The witnesses shrunk their heads between their shoulders. "Do you know any, I ask, devils that you are!" roared the *ispravnik* again.

"We know nothing, your honor," responded at last intrepidly a shrivelled old man, with mustaches and beard clipped short. He was an old discharged soldier. "What a bold fellow that Eremiech is!" the neighbors said to each other afterwards on their way home.

Despite the request of the *ispravnik*, Kharlof refused to appear with his daughters on the steps. "My vassals," he said, "will obey my will without the necessity of my presence." A shade of sadness was on his brow. He had turned pale; and this paleness, this sadness, accorded so ill with his giant features, that I began to wonder if these were symptoms of an attack of his old melancholy. This feeling of surprise seemed to be shared by the peasants as well: "How? there is our master, alive—and what a master! Martin Petrovich—and now he will own us no more. Is it possible?" I do not know if Kharlof suspected what was passing in the heads of his serfs, or if he wished to display his power for the last time: he suddenly opened the lattice of the window, and thrusting out his great head, cried, in the voice of a Stentor, "Obedience!"—and closed the lattice with a bang. The stupefaction of the peasants was by no means lessened by this performance; on the contrary they seemed to be, if possible, still more petrified, and ceased even to look at the window.

In the group of servants there were two girls of massive proportions, whose ragged calico frocks scarcely afforded them sufficient covering, and a man in a loose serge coat, so old that antiquity seemed to have crystallised upon it in a kind of hoar-frost; he had been a trumpeter under Potemkin. As for the little Cossack Maximka, Kharlof reserved him for himself. This group exhibited more animation than the peasants, and cast stealthy glances upon their new owners. These maintained a grave demeanor, especially Anna, whose closely pressed lips, and eyes obstinately bent on the ground, promised no good to her new vassals. Evlampia remained equally immovable, but from time to time she looked with an air of surprise at her betrothed, who had fancied that he must present himself on the steps with the others; and her great Juno-like eyes seemed to ask, "By what right are you here?" As for Slotkine, he had shown more emotion than any of them: an eager activity was visible in all his movements; and one would have said that he was tormented by some

fierce appetite. He jerked his arms, twitched his shoulders nervously, but kept his head bowed down.

Having finished the ceremony of placing the new propletors in possession, the *ispravnik* began rubbing his hands—a gesture which he was in the habit of making just before the first glass of brandy appeared—in anticipation of the breakfast; but Kharlof announced that he wished first to have the prayers of the priests, and an aspersion of holy-water. The priest therefore put on a surplice which hung in rags, and a deacon not less decrepit emerged from the kitchen, blowing hard at the embers in an old copper censer.

The prayers were recited. Kharlof never ceased heaving sigh after sigh; and as his corpulence prevented him from bowing to the earth, while he crossed himself with his right hand, with his left he indicated the place where his forehead would have touched had it been possible. Slotkine was at once radiant and in tears. Gitkof contented himself with twiddling his fingers in front of the buttons of his uniform, as do the gentlemen of the Imperial guard. Lizinski, as a Catholic, had quitted the room; as for the procurator, he prayed with such fervor, and sighed with such compunction, raising his eyes to heaven and moving his lips, that I also was seized with a paroxysm of devotion and fell to praying frantically. The prayers recited, and the holy-water sprinkled (at which I noticed that Lizinski, Catholic though he was, moistened his eyes with it devoutly, as did also the blind ex-trumpeter), Anna and Evlampia thanked their father again, and the time for breakfast had come.

There were many dishes, all good, and we did ample justice to them. At the appearance of the inevitable bottle of champagne, manufactured on the banks of the Don, the *ispravnik*, in his quality of representative of the authorities, and of one initiated in all the usages of the great world, raised his glass and proposed the health of the fair proprietresses, as well as of the most respected and magnanimous Martin Petrovich Kharlof.

At this word "magnanimous," Slotkine gave a cry of irrepressible emotion, and threw himself upon his benefactor to embrace him. "It is well, it is well," said Kharlof, repulsing him with his elbow. Just then there occurred what we may call a disagreeable incident.

Souvenir had been drinking steadily from the beginning of the breakfast. He suddenly rose from his chair, red as a beet in the face, and pointing his finger at Kharlof, burst into one of his villainous laughs. "Magnanimous! magnanimous!" he cried. "We shall see how he likes the taste of his magnanimity when they fling him—him, God's servant—bare-backed into the snow." "What drivel are you croaking there, you idiot?" said Kharlof with contempt. "Idiot? idiot?" echoed Souvenir. "God, who knows all, knows which of us two is the idiot. As for you, little father, you began by killing my sister, your wife; now you have ruined yourself—just scratched yourself out—Ha! ha! ha!"

"How dare you insult our venerable benefactor?" cried Slotkine, and letting go Kharlof's arm, he sprang towards Souvenir. "Do you not know that if our benefactor testified the slightest desire to recall his bounties, we would not hesitate to tear up the paper which conveys his munificent gift?"

"None the less you will fling him on his back in the snow," retorted Souvenir, crouching behind Lizinski.

"Silence!" cried Kharlof, in a voice of thunder. "If I were to strike you, there would be nothing left of you but a splotch of mud in the place where you are standing. And as for you, young dog," addressing Slotkine, "hold your tongue, and don't thrust your muzzle where you are not invited. If I, I, Martin Petrovich Kharlof, have decided that this act of donation shall take place, who can destroy it? Who in all the world is to oppose my will and pleasure?"

"Martin Petrovich," began the procurator, talking rather thickly—he had drank heavily, but that only served to augment his prodigious gravity—"if after all the gentleman has uttered a truth?—You have just achieved a great

action — and yet if — it should happen — which may God forbid — that instead of the gratitude due you, you should be treated with affront” —

I glanced furtively at the two sisters. Anna seemed to be devouring with her eyes the man who had just spoken ; and certainly never in my life have I beheld a woman’s face so malignant, so venomous, and yet so strangely beautiful. Evlampia had turned away with arms folded, and a more disdainful smile than ever curled her rosy lips. Kharlof rose from his chair, opened his lips, but voice failed him, and he smote the table with his fist so violently that everything in the room shook and clattered.

“Father,” Anna hastened to say, “the gentleman does not know you, and that is the reason he speaks thus. Pray do not do yourself an injury ; it is wrong for you to give vent thus to anger. Even your face is distorted.”

Kharlof looked at Evlampia ; but she said never a word, though her neighbor, Gitkof, pushed her elbow. “I thank you, my daughter Anna,” at last Kharlof said in a hollow voice. “You are a sensible girl : I rely on you and your husband.” At these words Slotkine gave another cry meant to express enthusiastic devotion, and Gitkof swelled out his breast and stamped with his heel ; but Kharlof did not seem to notice either of them.

“That vagabond,” he said, pointing at Souvenir, “is overjoyed that he has succeeded in enraging me. As for you, master procurator, you are not made, let me tell you, to judge Martin Kharlof. Your intelligence is not quite up to that level, my good sir. You are a man of education and one who knows the world, but your words are frivolous. The thing is done ; my decision will not change. You have all been welcome here, and I thank you. I shall now leave you. I am no longer the master here ; I am a guest, and as such, I shall use my privilege. Anna, entertain these gentlemen ; as for me, it is enough, I am going.” He turned his back on us as he said this, and without another word slowly left the chamber.

Of course the departure of the master of the house cast a damper upon the company, especially when our two

hostesses also vanished soon after. It was in vain that Slotkine tried to entertain us. The *ispravnik* could not refrain from reproaching the procurator with his misplaced frankness of speech. "I could not help it," the other said; "my conscience compelled me."

"Didn't I tell you he was a free-mason?" murmured Souvenir in my ear.

"Your conscience!" replied the *ispravnik*; "we all know what your conscience is. It lives in your pocket, as with the rest of us sinners."

During these remarks the priest, who had already risen, foreseeing the termination of the repast, was cramming great masses of food into his mouth. "I see that you have a good appetite," said Slotkine, with ill-humor. "It is a provision—or provision," humbly replied the priest; and in this response were heard the accents of an inveterate habit of hunger.

Carriage-wheels were heard at the door, and we separated. Returning home, I told my mother all that had happened. She heard me through to the end with many shakings of her head. "This promises no good," she said at last; "I do not like all these innovations."

The next day Kharlof came to dine with us. My mother congratulated him on the happy accomplishment of the affair he had had at heart. "You are a free man now," she said, "and should feel lighter."

"Of course I feel lighter," replied Kharlof, with an air that contradicted his words. "Nothing now hinders me from thinking of my soul and preparing for death."

My mother began to speak of the incidents of the day before—"Yes, yes," he said, "something happened—of no great consequence. Only—here is what troubles me," he added, after some hesitation. "Souvenir's foolish talk did not trouble me yesterday, nor what the procurator said; what did trouble me, was"—

He paused suddenly. "Was what?" my mother asked. Kharlof looked fixedly at her.—"Evlampia."

"Evlampia? Your daughter? How so?"

"Madame, she was a stone—a very statue! Has she

no feeling then? Anna, her sister, I have no fault to find with her ; she always does her duty ; she is a good girl—but Evlampia! She always was — why hide my weakness now?—my favorite child. Why had she no pity for me? Why did she not say to herself, He must be very ill, he must feel himself not long for this world, for him to give us all he has.—She is of stone. Not a word, not a look ; she bowed to the very earth, but there was not a spark of gratitude in her."

"Wait a little," replied my mother. "We will marry her to Gavril Fedoulitch ; that will soften her nature."

Kharlof raised his eyes. "And do you really count on him to that extent, Madame?"

"Certainly."

"Then you certainly know far more about the matter than I do. But do not forget this : Evlampia is myself—just the same character : Cossack blood, and a heart like a coal of fire."

"Have you such a heart as that, my father?"

Kharlof did not answer, and both were silent a few moments. "Well, Martin Petrovich," said my mother again, "how do you propose to save your soul? Will you go on a pilgrimage to St. Mitrophanes?* or to Kiew? or nearer, to the convent of Optino? They say that in that convent there has appeared a monk of the highest sanctity, named Macarius. No such saint has ever been seen. He has only to look at you and he sees all your sins through your body."

"If she really turns out an ingrate," replied Kharlof in a hoarse voice, "I think it would be easier for me to kill her with my own hands."

"Great Heaven! what is that you are saying?" cried my mother. "Are you losing your senses? See now what happened from not listening to me the other day when you came to ask my advice. And now you are going to torment yourself instead of thinking of your soul's welfare ; and it all will be as vain and useless as if you were to try to bite your elbow. You are complaining : you are afraid."

*Whose relics are in the convent of Voronej.

This last reproach seemed to sting him to the quick ; all his pride flowed back like a wave ; he drew himself up and threw back his head. "I am not one of those, Madame Natalia Nicolavna," he said with a gloomy air, "who complain, who are afraid. My only wish has been to let you know my feelings, you who are my benefactress, and whom I esteem infinitely ; but the Almighty knows"—here he raised his hand above his head—"that the solid world shall crumble to fragments before I break my word, or feel fear, or regret what I have done. And as for my daughters, in their duty and obedience they will not fail, no not in ages of ages!"

My mother stopped her ears—"Oh, little father, your voice is like the blast of a trumpet ! If you are so sure as that of your children, well for them and for you too ; but you need not split my head to pieces."

Kharlof apologised, heaved two or three sighs and was silent. He did not regain his animation up to the time of his departure. He said that above everything he was afraid of dying suddenly, and without time for repentance, and that he meant to lay it down as a rule for himself not to lose his temper, for anger distempered the blood and sent it to the head. As he had given up everything, what was the use of getting angry ? Let others now take their turn to work, and to lose temper. As he took leave of my mother he gave her a singular look, at once dreamy and questioning ; then suddenly drawing from his pocket the volume of *The Workman at Rest*, he slipped it into her hand.

"What is this for?" she asked.

"Read there," he said hastily, "there where the leaf is turned down. It speaks about death. I can feel that it is well said, but cannot understand it. I will come again, and then you can explain it to me." And he vanished through the door.

"That all looks badly, looks badly," said my mother, and opening the volume at the mark, she read as follows :—

"Death is a great and important work of nature. It consists in this, that the spirit, being far lighter, more

subtile, and more penetrating, not only than the material elements which environ it, but even than the electric force, clarifies and purifies itself in a chemical fashion, and ceases not to press forward until it reaches a region as immaterial as itself."

My mother read this passage over twice or thrice, and then threw the book away.

A few days later we received the news that her sister's husband was dead. She set out at once, taking me with her. Although she had not intended to stay with her sister longer than a week, we did not return home until the end of September.

III.

The first word that my valet-de-chambre Procopius, who was my groom as well, said to me was, that the woodcock had come in great numbers, and that they were most plentiful in the little birch wood near Kharlof's estate of Jeskovo. We had three hours yet before dinner. I seized my gun and game-bag, called my pointer, and telling Procopius to come along, we set out for Jeskovo, in all haste. There, sure enough, we found woodcock in plenty, and at some thirty shots we managed to kill five or six. Hurrying back with my game, I saw a peasant in difficulties by the road-side. His horse had balked, and he, swearing and crying at the same time, was pulling and jerking the rope which stood in stead of a bridle, until it seemed as if he would really pull the beast's head off. I cast a look at the wretched jade, whose ribs were fairly coming through her skin, while her sides, reeking with sweat, rose and fell with irregular pantings like a blacksmith's bellows.

Suddenly I recognised, by the scar on her shoulder, the old mare that for so many years had carried Kharlof about. "Is it possible that Martin Petrovich is dead?" I asked Procopius. We had been so absorbed in our sport, that up to that time we had not spoken of other matters.

"Oh no, he is living," answered Procopius. "Why did you ask that question?"

"Why, that is his mare there," I said. "Can he possibly have sold her?"

"You are righ', that is his mare. He did not sell her: they took her from him to give her to that peasant. A good many things have happened since you have been away," he added, with a slight smile, as if in answer to my look of astonishment. "And such things too—great heaven! Slotkine is master now."

"And Martin Petrovich?"

"Oh, Martin Petrovich has come down in the world. What he eats is cold and dry. * He counts for nothing now: one of these days they will drive him out of the house."

The idea that anybody could drive out such a giant as that, was one that my imagination refused to grasp. "But Gitkof," I asked, "what does *he* say to all this? I suppose he has married the other daughter by this time."

"Married!" cried Procopius, laughing outright. "Why, they don't let him put foot over the door. Did I not tell you that Slotkine was the master now?"

"And the fiancée?"

"Evlampia Martinovna? Ah sir, I could tell you plenty about her; but you are too young. Look there! is not Diana at a point?"

In fact, my pointer was planted in a rigid state before a thick oak copse which terminated a wooded ravine running up from the road. I ran up with Procopius: a woodcock rose, and we both fired and missed, after which we followed up to see if we could get another shot.

The soup was on the table when we reached home. My mother scolded me for having kept her waiting. I offered her the woodcocks I had brought, but she did not even look at them: she seemed displeased about something. Souvenir, Lizinski, and Gitkof were in the dining-room. The half-pay major was standing in a corner like a schoolboy in disgrace; his face expressed confusion and vexation; his eyes were red; he looked as if he had been crying.

It was easy for me to see that if my mother was displeased, it was not on account of my late arrival.

All the time of dinner she said not a word. The major cast piteous looks at her, but none the less ate with voracity. Souvenir trembled as if he had an ague; Lizinski alone maintained his accustomed calmness. "Vikenti Ossipich," my mother suddenly said to him, "have the goodness to send a carriage to-morrow for M. Kharlof, since his own is no longer at his disposal; and tell him that he must positively come—that I particularly wish to see him."

Lizinski was about to speak, but checked himself. "Let Slotkine know that I command him to come before me. Do you understand? that I command it."

"There is a rascal who ought—" Gitkof began to mutter, but my mother threw him a look of such scorn that he stopped quickly and turned away his head.

"Martin Petrovich will not come," whispered Souvenir in my ear, as we rose from table. "You can not conceive what has come to pass: the imagination of man is not equal to it. He hears nothing that is said to him, I give you my honor. It reminds me of the proverb: 'the pitchfork has seized the viper'"—and Souvenir broke into one of his villainous laughs.

Sure enough, his prediction was verified: Kharlof would not come. But my mother did not give up yet. She sent him a letter written with her own hand. Kharlof sent back a piece of brown wrapping-paper, on which were traced in great letters the following words:—"I take God to witness, I can not. The shame would kill me. I thank you—Let me disappear. Do not torment me.—Kharlof Martinko."*

Slotkine, however, came, but a day later than my mother had ordered. She took him into her cabinet. The conversation did not last more than a quarter of an hour; at the end of which time he came out, with a fiery red face, and with an expression so villainously insolent and malignant, that on meeting him in the hall, I stopped, stupefied, and Souvenir who was behind me cut short one

* Contemptuous diminutive of Martin.

of his habitual laughs. When my mother came out, her face was also red, and she loudly announced, before all the servants, that Slotkine should never again be admitted to her presence. "And if the daughters of Martin Petrovich venture to come," she added, "as they have impudence enough to do, do not let them enter the door."

At dinner she suddenly said,—"That miserable little Jew! It was I who dragged him out of the mire, by the ears, like a hare out of a bog; I made a man of him; he owes me everything, and he has the insolence to tell me not to meddle with what does not concern me; that Martin Petrovich is full of whims and notions, and that it will not do to humor him too much. Humor him! do you understand? The ungrateful little toad!"

Major Gitkof was for seizing the occasion to put in a word, but she cut him short as soon as he opened his mouth. "You are a fine fellow, you!" she exclaimed. "You did not know how to deal with a young woman, and you call yourself an officer! I can imagine how your battalions obeyed you! And he has an ambition to become my manager—a fine manager I should have, indeed!" Lizinski, at the foot of the table, indulged in a quiet smile, while the unlucky major, pulling his moustaches, clapped his napkin to his long face.

After dinner he went out on the steps to smoke his usual pipe; and he seemed so forlorn, that although I had but little sympathy for him, I went up to him. "Gavriko Fedoulitch," I said, "how is it that your marriage with Evlampia has all come to nothing? I had supposed you married long ago."

The ex-major gave me a most melancholy look. "A venomous serpent," he answered, laying a bitter stress on every syllable, "a serpent that crawled from beneath a rotten root, has pierced me with his fang, and turned to dust all my hopes in this life. And I would have told you all my miseries, Dmitri Semenich, had I not been afraid of displeasing madame your mother."

Procopius's expression: "You are too young," suddenly recurred to my memory. The ex-major gave a groan, and

smote his breast with his fist. "Patience, patience, that is all that is left me. Suffer, veteran! Suffer, old soldier! Thou hast served thy Czar with fidelity, without fear and without reproach, sparing neither sweat nor blood, and see what thou hast come to! If it had happened in my regiment, and if I had had the power," he continued, puffing furiously at his long pipe, "I should have beaten him with the flat of my sabre." Gitko took his pipe from his lips and looked steadily before him, as if he saw with his bodily eyes the scene that was pictured in his imagination. Souvenir came capering up. I left them together, and determined in myself that happen what might I would see Kharlof, for my boyish curiosity was uncontrollably excited by all these mysterious sayings.

The following day I set out again with my dog and gun, but without Procopius this time, for the wood of Jeskovo. It was a lovely day: I do not believe that there is such September weather anywhere in the world but in Russia. It was so still that more than a hundred paces off one could hear a squirrel leaping among the dry leaves which already strewed the ground; far away one could hear a dead branch detach itself from the top of a tree, fall lightly from bough to bough, and finally drop upon the soft grass. The air, neither warm nor cold, but full of odors, and as if slightly acidulated, brought a gentle tingling to the cheeks and eyes. A thread of gossamer, fine and flexible as that of the silkworm, came floating through the air, caught on the barrel of my gun, and floated out in all its length; a sure sign that the fine weather would last. The sun gave a pale and soft light, almost like moonlight. I flushed some woodcocks, but I paid but little attention to them, for I knew that the Jeskovo woods reached almost to Kharlof's house, and quite to his garden hedge, so I went in that direction, without knowing precisely in what way I should enter, or indeed whether I ought even to attempt it, since my mother was not on good terms with the new owners of the estate.

Suddenly I heard steps not far from me: I listened — some one was approaching. "You ought to have prevented it," said a female voice.

"That is easily said," replied the voice of a man.
"How is one to do everything at once?"

The voices had a familiar sound. Behind the walnut trees already stripped of their leaves, appeared a blue dress, and beside it a dark caftan, and Evlampia and Slotkine emerged into the open space where I was standing. Both seemed confused at seeing me, and Evlampia turned suddenly and disappeared among the bushes. As for Slotkine, he hesitated a moment and then came up to me. His face no longer offered a trace of that obsequious humility with which, four months before, he had polished with his hands the curb-chain of my bridle as he walked my horse up and down his father-in-law's court-yard; but on the other hand I saw nothing of that insolent defiance which had struck me the evening before.

"Have you killed many woodcocks?" he asked, taking off his cap, and running his hands through his curly black hair. "You are shooting in our woods, you know; but you are perfectly welcome: we have no objection; quite the contrary."

"I have shot nothing, and I am about to quit your woods at once."

Slotkine put his cap on hastily—"Why so?" he asked, holding out both his hands; "we don't order you away; in fact we are delighted—Evlampia Martinovna will say the same. Evlampia, come here. Where is she then?"

Evlampia's head appeared above the bushes, but she did not come. "I may even say," continued Slotkine, "that it is very agreeable to me to meet you. Madame your mother condescended to be angry with me yesterday, and would listen to no explanation. But I solemnly swear to you that I have nothing to blame myself for. It is not possible to deal otherwise with Martin Petrovich; he has entirely fallen into his second childhood. We can not, anyhow, satisfy all his caprices; and as for respect, he has all he wants. Ask Evlampia if he has not."

Evlampia neither moved nor spoke.

"But, Vladimir Vassilivich," I asked, "why did you sell M. Kharlof's horse? I do not like to think of that poor brute falling into the hands of a peasant."

"Why we sold her? What a question! What use was she, except to eat hay? A peasant will manage to get some work out of her. As for Martin Petrovich, if he wants to go out, he has only to ask us. We will not refuse to let him have a conveyance—if it is not a work-day."

"Vladimir Vassilich!" cried Evlampia in a restrained voice, as if to call him, and without moving from her place. She was twisting plantain stems around her fingers and knocking off the heads by switching them against each other.

"Then there's that little Cossack Maximka," Slotkine went on. "Martin Petrovich complains that he has been taken from him and bound out as an apprentice. But consider the thing yourself: what would he have turned out with Martin Petrovich? A simple vagabond, and nothing more. He is not even a good servant, because he is too stupid and too young. Now he is apprentice to a saddler. Now let him learn to be a good workman, and he will be some use to himself and pay us a good *obrok** besides. In a little household like ours that is always something: poor folks like us can't afford to despise anything."

"And this is the man that Kharlof treated like a lackey," I thought to myself. "And who reads to Martin Petrovich now?" I asked him.

"Read? Oh yes, he did have a book, which has disappeared, thank heaven. A pretty idea to want to read at his age!"

"And who shaves him?"

Slotkine began to laugh, as if it were a very good joke. "Nobody. At first he used to burn his beard off with a candle; now he lets it grow, and you ought just to see him."

"Vladimir Vassilich," called Evlampia more urgently, "come here."

Slotkine answered with a little wave of his hand. "Martin Petrovich," he went on, "is clothed and shod;

* Money paid to his master every year by a serf who is allowed to work for himself.

he eats what we eat, and what more can he want! Did he not tell us himself that he wished nothing more in this world but to think of saving his soul? Very well, let him be about it: he ought to remember that now—turn it as you please—all belongs to us. Then he complains, too, that we don't pay him his pension; but do we always have the money? And what does he want with the money anyhow, when everything is furnished him? I give you my word that the way we treat him is all for his own good. And just look at the rooms he occupies: we really need them, need them very much. Without them we can hardly turn round. We even try to find some amusements for him. So against St. Peter's day I bought him in town some first-rate fish-hooks; they were real English hooks and very dear. We have tench in the tank; and all he has to do is to sit on the bank and fish. An hour or two passes that way, and he would have a good fry. What better employment for an old man?"

"Vladimir Vassilich!" Evlampia called for the third time in an authoritative voice, and threw away the twigs she was twisting in her hands—"I am going"—her eyes met mine—"I will not wait any longer," and she vanished into the bushes.

"I am coming, I am coming," said Slotkine. "Martin Petrovich himself approves," he went on, turning again to me. "At first he was offended; he even complained, until he had thought it over and seen the real state of affairs. He was a man—you remember him—of a violent temper—hot—very hot. Now he is quite quiet and gentle. Madame your mother was angry with me. What would you have? She is a great lady, and feels about these matters as Martin Petrovich did in his time. But do you come and see for yourself; and when you see a chance, put in a word for us. I don't forget the kindness of Natalia Nicolavna; but after all we had to do as we are doing."

"And Gitkof," I said, "why was he refused?"

Slotkine shrugged his shoulders. "Fedoulich? That fellow with a head like a horse? What upon earth was

he good for? He has been a soldier all his life, and on a sudden fancies that he can manage an estate. He thinks he can manage peasants, because he has thrashed men; and he knows nothing about it, because he don't know when to thrash. It was Evlampia Martinovna who refused him. Does a soldier know anything in the world? With him all our affairs would have gone to ruin quick enough."

Here Evlampia gave a sonorous call.

"I am coming, I am coming," answered Slotkine. "I have the honor to bid you good day, Dmitri Semenich. Kill as many woodcock as you please; it is a bird of passage and belongs to no one; but if a hare crosses your path, spare it, it is our game. And one thing I forgot: haven't you a pup from that pointer of yours?"

Here Evlampia gave another call, and Slotkine hurried off.

Left alone, I began to wonder to myself, How did it happen that Kharlof had not exterminated this Slotkine, and, in his own phrase, only left a splotch of mud where he had been? And how was it that Slotkine did not fear something of the sort? Kharlof, I thought, must have grown quiet, sure enough. I grew more and more desirous to get into Jeskovo, and at least catch a glimpse of that colossus whom I could not even imagine in a humble and subdued state.

I had reached the edge of the woods when a woodcock rose up from almost under my feet and flew over towards a neighboring thicket. I pulled trigger, but my gun snapped; and unwilling to lose a fine bird, I followed after him. I had hardly gone fifty yards, when in an open space under a large birch, I saw Slotkine. He was lying on his back, with his arms folded under his head, looking at the sky with an air of contentment, and lazily swinging his left leg, which hung over his right knee. He had not observed my approach. A few paces from him was moving Evlampia, slowly, and with her eyes cast down; she seemed to be looking for something in the grass, like mushrooms or flowers, and she stooped from time to time, stretched out her hand, and sung in an undertone. I recognised the words of an old Russian ballad:

"Rise, mount to heaven, storm-cloud,
Strike, strike my father-in-law,
Smite with thunder my mother-in-law;
As for my young wife, I will kill her myself."

Evlampia's voice as she sung grew clearer and louder, and she gave the last verse with emphasis. Slotkine continued to smile in a silly sort of way, while she, as she paced, seemed to be describing circles around him.

"Listen to her," he said at last. "What will not come into women's heads."

"What do you mean?"

He raised his head: "What do I mean? What words are those you are singing?"

"You know, Volodia,* that it is not permitted to leave out a word of that song"—As she spoke Evlampie caught sight of me, and gave a cry of surprise, and we both hurried off in opposite directions. An instant later I was at the edge of the woods again, and after crossing a little meadow, found myself by Kharlof's garden.

I went along by the hedge, and soon, between the white stems of the willows, I saw the court-yard and the two small houses. All the place seemed cleaner and in better order: everywhere were to be seen the traces of active and constant supervision. Anna Martinovna came out upon the steps, and blinking her pale blue eyes in the sun, looked long and steadily in the direction of the woods.

"Have you seen the master?" she asked of a peasant who was crossing the yard.

"Vladimir Vassilich?" he replied, pulling off his cap: "I think he went to the woods."

"I know he went there. Have you not seen him come back?"

"I have not seen him." The man continued standing with his head uncovered.

"Go," she said; "Stop: do you know where Martin Petrovich is?"

"Martin Petrovich," replied the man in a drawling voice, first lifting one arm and then the other as if he

*A caressing diminutive of Vladimir.

wished to point out something, "is sitting down there by the pond with a fishing-rod in his hand: in among the rushes, with a fishing-rod. Does he expect to catch any fish at this time? Heaven knows."

"Very good; you can go," answered Anna; "but loosen your wheel there, don't you see it is locked?"

The man hastened to obey; and she, still standing on the steps, looked in the direction of the wood; then, with a menacing gesture, turned into the house. "Axutka!" she called, in her imperious voice. I was struck with her angry air, and the way in which her thin lips were compressed. She was negligently dressed, and a loose tress of her hair hung down on her shoulder. Despite the carelessness of her dress, and her evident ill-humor, I thought her beautiful still, and would have liked to kiss the slender nervous hand with which she twice threw back the loose tress.

Had Kharlof really turned fisherman? I wondered, as I made my way toward the pond at the lower end of the garden. I mounted on the bank and looked to left and right, but saw no one. I followed one margin of it round, and at last, at the bottom of a little inlet, in a forest of bulrushes reddening in the autumn weather, I perceived a grayish mass. It was Kharlof. Without a cap, with dishevelled hair, clad in an old great-coat split at all the seams, he was sitting or crouching motionless on the bare earth, so motionless that at my approach a little wheat-ear sprang from the dry mud at two paces from him, and skinned across the bank with a shrill twitter. The whole figure of Kharlof was so strange, that at sight of him my dog stopped short and began to growl. Kharlof, scarcely turning his head, looked at the dog and at me as a savage might have looked. His beard greatly changed his appearance; it was short, but close and curly like astrakhan wool. He was holding his rod by one end in his right hand, and the other end was resting on the water. My heart began to beat violently, but I drew near and saluted him. He fell to winking his eyes slowly, as if he were awaking from sleep.

"You are fishing, Martin Petrovich?" I asked.

"Yes, fishing," he answered in a hoarse voice, and gave a jerk to his rod, at the end of which was hanging a bit of string without a hook.

"But your line is broken," I said. At the same time I noticed that he had neither fish-basket nor bait; and anyhow, what could he catch in September?

"Broken?" he said, passing his hand over his face—"it is no matter"—and he threw his line into the water again. "Is this the son of Natalia Nicolavna?" he asked presently. I had been looking at him with astonishment: his form, though much thinner, was still gigantic; but what rags covered him, and what a ruin he appeared!

"Yes," I replied, "I am the son of Natalia Nicolavna."

"Is she alive?"

"My mother is well. She was much hurt at your refusal: she did not expect it from you."

Kharlof drooped his head. "Have you been — there?" he asked, nodding his head toward the house. "You have not been? Go there. What do you want here? Go. Not worth while talking with me; it tires me." He was silent awhile. "You are always strolling about with your gun. When I was young, I ran about too, but my father — how I respected him! Not like they do now-a-days. My father used to thrash me, and that settled the matter: no foolishness on my part: I respected him."

Here he paused again. "Don't stop here," he said, presently. "Go to the house. You will see. Everything is going on finely. Volodka"—here his voice seemed to choke—"Volodka understands everything. He is a fine fellow — but he is a scoundrel for all that." I did not know what to say. Kharlof went on with great calmness "Look at my daughters too. You remember them. I had two; excellent housekeepers. As for me, brother, I have grown old; I am pensioned off now. Rest and quiet, you understand."

What rest! I thought, looking around. "Martin Petrovich," I suddenly said, "you must positively come to see us."

Kharlof gave me a side-look. "Go, I tell you, brother." "Come ; do not refuse my mother."

"Go, go," he replied. "What is the use of your talking with me?"

"If you have no carriage, my mother will send you one."

"Go, I say."

"Come, Martin Petrovich, give me your hand." He bent down his head ; it seemed to me that I could see a flush of color on his muddy cheeks. "You will come and see us, will you not? What is the good of staying here and tormenting yourself?"

"What do you mean by tormenting myself?"

"I mean that you are wrong to do as you are doing."

Kharlof seemed to sink into thought. Emboldened by his silence, I resolved to press him further. "Martin Petrovich," I said, taking a seat by him, "I know all—absolutely all. I know how shamefully you are treated. What a condition for you! But why lose all courage?"

He said not a word, but let the rod he was holding slip from his hand. I thought that I was working wonders with him, and felt like a sage. "It is true," I proceeded, "that you acted imprudently in giving everything to your daughters ; it was a great and generous act, and generosity is so rare in these times. But if your daughters are ungrateful, you should repay it with contempt, yes, with contempt, and not give yourself up to these black humors."

"Leave me!" muttered he, grinding his teeth ; and his eyes, which were still fixed on the water, flashed with wrath. "Begone!"

"But, Martin"—

"Begone, I tell you, or I shall kill you!"

I had drawn quite close to him, but at these last words I sprang back. "What do you say?"

"Begone, or I shall kill you." His voice came from his breast in a hoarse roar ; his furious eyes looked straight before him. "I shall fling you into the water, with your silly advice! A boy like you to come disturbing an old man!"

He has gone mad, I thought ; but while I looked at

him my astonishment redoubled. Kharlof was weeping! Tears were chasing each other down his cheeks, and yet his face still wore its ferocious expression. "Go, I say," he repeated, "or by heaven I will kill you — as an example to others." He made a sudden movement, and drew up his lip in a fierce grin like that of a wild boar; and I caught up my gun and made off as fast as I could, my dog following me, barking wildly, and apparently as much frightened as I was.

On my return home I said nothing to my mother of what I had seen; but happening to meet Souvenir, I cannot tell why, I told him the whole. This disgusting creature was so delighted with my story that he fairly writhed with laughter. I was strongly tempted to beat him.

"Oh," he said, panting with laughter, "if I could only have seen that great carcass of a Kharlof sitting in the mud!"

"If you are so curious about it, go to the pond, and you will see him."

"Oh yes! and suppose he kills me instead of you?"

I was sorry afterwards that I had not held my tongue.

About the middle of October, nearly three weeks after my conversation with Kharlof, I was standing at the window of my chamber, on the second floor, looking in a rather dreary frame of mind at our court-yard and the road beyond it. For five days the weather had been so wretched that no shooting was possible. Every living creature seemed to have taken shelter; the very sparrows kept themselves hid, and even the crows had disappeared. The wind whistled furiously at times, and then sank to a hollow moaning. The sky, covered with low clouds, without a break, varied from a pallid gray to a sombre leaden hue; and the rain which poured incessantly, at this moment came down in floods and dashed against the windows. The trees tossed their leafless branches wildly about. Everywhere one saw great patches of water strewn with dead leaves, and great bubbles were rising and bursting on their surfaces lashed by the rain. The roads were unfathomable abysses of mud. The cold penetrated into the

rooms, got into one's clothes, and even into the marrow of one's bones. I had a sort of chilly fear, a kind of unformed feeling as if I should never again see the sun or any color but muddy grays and dull browns.

I was standing looking out of my window, and remarking that though it was just noon, the day seemed to have grown darker than ever, when I thought I perceived something crossing the yard from the entrance-gate toward the steps — something that looked like a bear walking on his hind-legs. I doubted the evidence of my eyes. Yet, if not a bear, I had certainly seen something enormous, black, and shaggy. I was wondering what this formidable apparition might be, when a terrible noise arose on the lower story, and I heard steps hurrying, and excited voices. I rushed down the staircase, and sprang into the dining-room. At the door was standing my mother, apparently petrified with astonishment, and behind her were several women with frightened faces. The steward, two lackeys, the little Cossack, all staring, were crowding at the door of the hall. In the middle of the dining-room, in rags, covered with mud, and so drenched with rain that rivulets were running from it over the floor, on its knees, panting, gasping, and choking, was the monstrous creature that I had seen crossing the yard. It was Kharlof. I drew near, and saw, not his face, but his head, for he was pressing both his hands upon his face. He was panting noisily, convulsively; it seemed as if something was boiling in his breast. All of humanity that I could distinguish in this mass of clotted grime were the whites of his small eyes rolling wildly. I remembered at the moment the remark of our visitor who had compared him to a mastodon; and in truth a very similar spectacle must have been presented by an antediluvian monster which had barely escaped the clutch of another still more formidable that had attacked it in the midst of the bottomless mud of a primeval morass.

"Martin Petrovich!" at last cried my mother, clasping her hands. "Is that really you? Good heaven!"

"I, I," responded a broken voice, as if the words were wrung out by torture: "Yes, I"

"But what has happened?"

"Natalia Nicolavna—I have run here—all the way from home—on foot."

"And in this weather! You scarcely resemble a human creature. Get up and sit in a chair. And you," she said to the maids, "bring towels at once. Can you not bring some dry clothes?" she said to the steward.

The steward raised his hands to heaven, as if to say, where can we get clothes to fit that giant?—"Then bring a coverlid, or a horse-blanket, we have a new one that has not been used. And get up, Martin Petrovich, and sit in a chair."

"They have turned me out, madame," cried Kharlof with a prolonged groan, throwing back his head and stretching out both his arms—"turned me out, Natalia Nicolavna—out of my own house—my own daughters!"

My mother crossed herself—"Can it be possible! Horrible!—But do not stay there, Martin Petrovich; I ask it as a favor."

Two maids came with towels, and the steward with a great woollen rug. The long peaked head of Souvenir appeared at the door and vanished again.

"Come, get up!" my mother now said in an authoritative tone, "and tell me everything that has happened."

Kharlof rose slowly. Staggering like a drunken man, he found a chair and sank into it. The maids came up with their cloths, but he motioned them away, and refused the rug the steward offered to wrap around him. My mother did not insist: it was evident that it was not possible to dry Kharlof, so they contented themselves with wiping up the pools he had left upon the floor.

"Madame—Natalia Nicolavna," he said at last with an effort, "I will tell you the whole. It was I who was most to blame. It is pride that has undone me, as it did King Nebuchadnezzar. I said to myself, The Lord has not deprived me of sense—and then the fear of death beside—my head was turned. I said to myself, Before I have done with life, I will show the whole world my will and my power. I will gratify them all, and all will be

grateful to me until I die." Here he bounded almost from his seat—"Driven off with kicks, like a mangy dog, there's their gratitude!"

His eyes still rolled wildly ; he raised his hands as high as his chin and smote them together—"They took away Maximka ; they took away my carriage, my horse ; they put me on rations ; they did not pay me the allowance I had bargained for ; they clipped and pared away every thing—and I did not say a word, on account of my pride again, and that my enemies should not be able to say, 'See the old fool ; he repents it now.' And you, madame, you gave me warning ; you said, 'You will not be able to bite your elbow.' That is the reason I never spoke a word. And to-day I go into my poor chamber ; it is occupied. My bed is thrust away in a garret.—'You can sleep there just as well : you are only endured as a favor, and we want your room for other purposes.' Who says that to me—who? A Volodka Slotkine, a miserable"—here his voice failed him.

"But your daughters, what did they say?"

"I submitted ; I held my tongue," Kharlof went on without noticing her question, "but oh the bitterness and shame of it! I blushed to appear in God's blessed light. That is the reason I would not come to your house. I have tried everything, both caresses and threats. I have reproached them, and again I have bowed to them—bowed low—thus" (Kharlof showed how he had bowed to them) "and all in vain. At first I said to myself—Break everything, scatter everything, let not a trace be left, that it may be seen who I am. But afterwards I submitted : it is a cross, I said, that heaven has laid upon me. And all at once—to-day—like a dog! And who? Volodka! As for my daughters about whom you are so good as to ask, have they any will left of their own? They are just slaves of Volodka, that is what they are."

My mother made a gesture of astonishment. "I can understand that of Anna," she said; "Anna is his wife ; but your other daughter"—

"Evlampia? worse than the other. She is Volodka's,

soul and body. That is the reason she refused your major. Volodka ordered her. Anna—of course she is angry, especially when she can not bear her sister, anyhow. But she submits ; he has put a spell on her too, the villain ! And then you see perhaps she likes to think, ‘ You used to be proud enough, Evlampia, and what are you now ? ’ Great heaven ! I can not speak of it.”

My mother looked at me with an uneasy glance, and I drew back a little, fearing lest she should send me away. “I deeply regret it, Martin Petrovich,” she said, “that the girl I helped to bring up has given you so much unhappiness. I have been thoroughly deceived in her, it seems.”

Kharlof gave a deep groan, and smote his breast with his clenched fists. “Madame, I can not bear my daughters’ ingratitude ; I can not bear it. Have I not given them everything ? And by what right did I do it ? My conscience does not give me a moment of rest. Oh what thoughts have not passed through my mind there, on the bank of the pond, when I seemed to be fishing ! If at least, I said to myself, you had been useful to any one ; if you had given alms to the poor, if you had set free your serfs, in recompense for having devoted their lives—Have you not to be responsible for them to God ? And now is the time when their accumulated tears will pour upon you. What is their lot now ? Let us tell the truth : even in my time their pit was deep ; now the bottom of it can not be seen. With all these sins I have loaded my soul ; I have sacrificed my conscience to my children—and as a reward am kicked like a dog ! When he said to me —your Volodka,” he went on with increased excitement, “that I should no longer live in my own room, I who laid every beam in the wall with my own hands —when he said that with his insolent mouth, Heaven only knows what I felt. In my head all was darkness—a knife-stab in my heart.—Either to kill him, or to leave the house. It was then that I ran to you, my benefactress. Where could I go to lay my head ? And the rain and the mud—I must have fallen twenty times. And now see

the horrible state I am in." Kharlof here looked at his reeking and ragged garments, and made a motion as if about to rise from his chair.

"There, keep still and rest yourself, Martin Petrovich," said my mother. "You have soiled my floor, and what of that? Great damage indeed! Listen: I will have you taken to a warm room, where you can wash, and get rid of these things. You will find a comfortable bed there: get a good sleep, which you must need."

"I can not sleep, madame," he sadly replied. "It seems as if hammers were beating in my head — Turned out of doors, like some unclean animal!" —

"Go to bed and sleep," my mother reiterated. "Then I will send you some tea, and we will have a talk. Don't lose courage, my old friend: you are driven from your house, but you will always find a home in mine. I have not forgotten that you once saved my life."

"My benefactress," cried Kharlof, covering his face with his hands, "it is your turn now to save me."

This appeal touched my mother almost to tears. "I ask nothing better than to help you all I can, Martin Petrovich; but you must promise me that you will obey me for the future, and that you will put far away every evil thought."

He uncovered his face. "If it must be," he said, bending before her, "I can even forgive."

My mother nodded in sign of approval. "I am overjoyed to see in you so truly Christian a disposition; but of that we will speak later. Now go wash and try to sleep." Then turning to the steward, she said, "Take Martin Petrovich to the green room, the one your master used to occupy. Let his clothes be cleaned, and tell the housekeeper to look out a change of linen."

"Your orders shall be obeyed, madame," the steward replied.

"And as soon as he awakes, send for the tailor and let him be measured for some new clothes. He must be shaved, too; but that can be done afterwards."

"Your orders shall be attended to, madame. Martin Petrovich, have the goodness to come with me."

Kharlof arose, gave my mother a long look, and was about to approach her, but restrained himself and made her a profound bow, bending his body as low as his girdle. Then he crossed himself three times before the holy images, and followed the steward. I slipped out behind them.

The steward conducted Kharlof to the green room, and went off to ask the housekeeper for linen. Souvenir had watched us, it seems, and crept into the room before, and he now began capering and grimacing around Kharlof, who motionless, with his arms dangling, was standing between two windows, the water still running from his clothes.

"O Shwede Kharlus!" cried Souvenir, who was holding his sides, as if with intolerable mirth, "O great founder of the house of Kharlof, look down upon thy descendant! Is he not beautiful? is he not worthy of thee? Your Excellence, permit me the honor of kissing your hand — but why have you black gloves on?"

I tried to check this miserable buffoon, but in vain. "He used to treat me as a parasite," he said. "He used to say to me, 'you have not a roof belonging to you.' And now behold, he has become an eater of other men's bread, just as I am. Martin Kharlof or bare-foot Souvenir, it is all the same now. He will learn the taste of the bread of charity. They will take an old dirty crust that a dog has snuffed at and would not touch, and give it to him and say, 'here, here is a treat for you.' Ha! ha! ha!"

Kharlof still stood with head bowed down and drooping arms. "Martin Kharlof," the wretch went on, "the gentleman of ancient lineage, how haughty he was, and how fierce! 'Come not near me,' he would say, 'or I will crush you!' And when his great mind hit upon that rare piece of wisdom, to divide his estate, he must cluck, 'gratitude, gratitude!' And why did he forget me? Perhaps I would have had a little more heart. Did I not say they would put him out bare-backed in the snow?"

"Souvenir!" I cried. The rascal paid no attention to me. Kharlof never moved. One would have thought that he now at last perceived how saturated he was with rain

and mud, and thought of nothing but of getting out of his reeking clothes ; but the steward did not return.

" And that is the thing they call a warrior," Souvenir began again. " He saved his country in 1812 ; he has shown his valor. Oh yes : to pull the shirts off half-frozen marauders, that we are great at ; but let a girl in her tantrums stamp her foot, and our heart goes down to our heels."

" Souvenir ! " I cried again.

Kharlof gave him a sidelong look. Up to that moment he had not seemed to notice his presence ; but my exclamation drew his attention. " Take care, brother," he said in a repressed voice : " men jump, and jump, until they jump one time too often and break their neck."

Souvenir burst into a loud laugh. " Oh, you frightened me, my most respectable brother. If you had only combed your nice hair, for if it dries, which heaven forbid, it can never be washed, it will have to be cropped with a sickle" —here he placed his arms akimbo—" and you want to play the bully still ! A naked worm — a beggar ! Tell me now where is that roof of which you were so proud ? ' I have a roof, an ancestral roof,' you used to say, ' and thou hast none.' "

Souvenir seemed to be growing furious in his vindictive joy. " M. Bitschko," I cried, " in heaven's name what are you saying ? " But he continued to caper like a mad monkey around Kharlof, and neither the steward nor the housekeeper came. I grew frightened : Kharlof, who in his interview with my mother had gradually grown calm, and seemed even in some degree to be resigned to his fate, showed signs that his fury was returning. His breathing grew shorter and quicker, the veins of his neck began to rise in cords under his ears, his hands twitched convulsively, and his eyes began to roll under the mask of dark mud that encrusted his face. I threatened Souvenir that I would call my mother ; but a demon seemed to have taken possession of that malicious buffoon. " Yes, yes, most respectable sir," he cried, " see where we are now. My young ladies your daughters, and your son-in-

law Vladimir Vassilich, are making merry over you under your ancestral roof. If you had only cursed them, as you promised to do—but no, that too was beyond your ability. You thought yourself much more than a match for Vladimir Vassilich: you took the liberty to call him Volodka. Now he is M. Slotkine, a great proprietor, a lord. And you—what are you?"

A terrific roar interrupted Souvenir's harangue. Kharlof had burst into fury. His fists were clenched, his face grew livid, foam gathered on his lips, and his whole frame shook with rage. "A roof, did you say?" he cried in his voice of iron—"Curse them, did you say? No, I will not curse them: much they care for that; but the roof—I will pull it down from ridge to foundation: they shall have no more than I. They shall know what manner of man is Kharlof: they shall know what it costs to make me their laughing-stock. My strength has not yet left me. They shall have no roof—no, no!" I was petrified with fright. It was no longer a man that I had before me, but a furious wild beast. Souvenir, half dead with terror, had crawled under a table.

"They shall have no roof!" Kharlof cried once more, and, almost overturning the steward and the housekeeper who at last were bringing the linen, he sprang out of the house, rushed across the court-yard, and disappeared through the gate.

IV.

My mother was very angry when the steward, with a scared look, told her that Kharlof was gone. He did not venture to conceal from her how it had happened.

"It was your doing then?" she said to Souvenir, who came up sheepishly to kiss her hand; "it is your vile tongue that has done all the mischief."

"Pardon, pardon," stammered Souvenir, putting his arms behind his back, in his servile way.

"How have you deserved it?" my mother replied

sternly ; and without allowing him to speak, she had him driven from the room. She then sent for Lizinski, and ordered him to take a carriage, go at once to Jeskovo, and bring back Kharlof, cost what it might. "Do not come back without him," were her last words.

The melancholy Pole bowed and went out. I went back to my room, seated myself again at the window and began thinking over what had just happened. I could not conceive how it was that Kharlof, who had endured almost without a murmur the wrongs inflicted by his own children, had not been able to control himself under the stings of such a malicious tongue as Souvenir's. I did not know at that time what bitterness may lie hidden under raillery, even though coarse, and coming from a creature one despises. The detested name of Slotkine, which he had pronounced, fell like a spark upon powder.

An hour passed. I saw the carriage enter the yard again, but without Kharlof. Lizinski sprang from it and ran up the steps : he had a frightened look, which I had never seen in him before. I hurried down at once, and followed him into the room.

"Well, have you brought him back ?" asked my mother.

"No, madame ; I was not able."

"How so ? Did you see him ?"

"Yes, madame."

"What has happened to him ? An apoplexy ?"

"Nothing has happened to him. He is tearing down his house."

"What do you say ?"

"He is on the roof of the new house, tearing it to pieces. He has already thrown down a score or more of planks, and some half-a-dozen beams."

My mother opened her eyes with astonishment. "Alone — on the roof — he is tearing down his house ?"

"As I tell you, madame. He is standing on the garret floor, and tearing everything away, right and left. His strength, as you know, is gigantic. Then, to tell the truth, the roof is not very strong. It is only a sheathing shingled over, with lathing-nails."

My mother looked at me: "Sheathing — lathing-nails," she repeated, evidently not understanding these words. "But what have you done then?"

"I came back for instructions, madame. Unless we send a considerable party we can do nothing there: all the peasants have hid themselves in affright."

"But his daughters?"

"They are of no use. They run up and down as if they were distracted; they keep up a clamor, and that is all."

"Is Slotkine there?"

"Yes, madame, and howling loudest of the party."

It was plain that this was an extraordinary emergency. What was best to do? Send to the town for the *ispravnik*? Assemble the peasants? My mother was completely bewildered. Gitkof, who had come to dinner, was as confounded as the rest. To be sure he talked of calling on the military for assistance; but accustomed to discipline, he would give no advice, and confined himself to looking at my mother with devotion and humility. Lizinski, seeing that no instructions were to be looked for, finally said, with his usual overwrought respect, that if he were allowed to take with him some grooms, gardeners, and other servants, he would try to do something.

"Try, try!" my mother exclaimed, "quick, as quick as you can. I take the responsibility for all."

Lizinski gave a cold smile. "It is my duty to say, madame, that I can not answer for the result. M. Kharlof's strength is very great,—and so is his desperation."

"It is all that horrible Souvenir's doing. I will never forgive him—but go, go quick!"

"Take plenty of ropes, M. Lizinski, and fire-escape hooks," said Gitkof in a low voice, "and if you have a net, it would be a good thing to take it along. It once happened in our regiment"—

"I have no need of your instructions, sir," the manager replied contemptuously.

Gitkof answered with an offended air that he was expecting to be asked to assist.

"O no!" cried my mother, "stay here. Let M. Lizinski go alone. Go, my dear sir!"

I ran to the stables, saddled my little horse myself, and set off at a gallop for Jeskovo.

The rain had ceased, but the wind was blowing more violently than ever, and beat hard against my face. About half-way my saddle began to turn, and I dismounted to tighten the girths. Some one called me by name: it was Souvenir, who was running across the country to overtake me.

"Aha, little father," he cried, "curiosity spurs you hard. So it does me. I would not wish to die without seeing such a thing."

"You want to feast your eyes on the work you have done!" I exclaimed with indignation, and springing on my horse, set off at a gallop again. But that intolerable Souvenir was not to be left behind; he even chuckled and grimaced as he ran.

Here at length was Jeskovo, here was the bank of the pond, the garden-hedge and the willows which surrounded the house. I reached the gate, tied my horse, and was stricken dumb with amazement. Of a good third of the roof of the new house, not more than a skeleton was left. Two sides of the house were piled up with broken planks. On the floor of the garret, rising out of the dust and the fragments, was a blackish mass, moving with a strange and unwieldy kind of activity; at one moment this creature shook furiously the only chimney that was left standing, the other being already in ruins; at the next it tore off a plank of the roof and hurled it to the ground; then seized a rafter with both hands and wrenched at it with violence. This was Kharlof. And this time again I was struck with his likeness to a bear; his head, his back, his shoulders, his legs planted wide apart, were all bear-like. The furious wind which had arisen blew about his rags and his long hair. It was horrible to see his body, naked and red, as it appeared through the rents in his garments; and it was horrible to hear his hoarse and savage growlings.

A crowd filled the court-yard; peasant women, laborers,

children, were thronging along the hedges. Some twenty peasants were gathered in a group a little way off. The old priest, whom I remembered, was standing bare-headed on the steps of one of the small houses ; from time to time he raised an old crucifix in his aged hands, and seemed to show it to Kharlof, silently and without hope. Near him, her back against a wall, and her arms crossed on her breast, Evlampia watched her father with a gloomy attentiveness. As for Anna, now she thrust her head out of a window, now she ran into the yard, then back into the house again. Slotkine, in an old dressing-gown and a cap on his head, with a livid and greenish pallor in his cheeks, was stamping about, holding in his hands his single-barrelled gun. He panted, he threatened, he shivered ; he took aim at Kharlof, then threw his gun over his shoulder, then aimed again, bawled, cried—he had indeed the look of a Jew, as my mother had said. So soon as he saw Souvenir and me, he ran to meet us.

"Look, just look at what he is doing!" he cried, with a whining lamentable voice. "I have already sent for the police, but nobody comes, nobody comes. If I fire at him, I shall not be answerable before the law, for every man has the right to defend his own property. I will shoot—by heaven I *will* shoot!" and running nearer to the house, he cried : "Martin Petrovich, if you do not come down I will shoot you!"

"Shoot!" answered a terrible voice from the roof, "shoot away! In the meantime here is a present for you."

A long plank flew threw the air, whirled twice around, and fell crashing at the very feet of Slotkine. He leaped back in affright, and Kharlof burst into a laugh of scorn.

"Great heaven!" murmured some one behind me. I turned: it was Souvenir. "Oho," I said to myself, "you have stopped your sneering and chuckling now!"

Slotkine seized a peasant by the collar: "Climb!" he roared, shaking him with all his strength, "climb up there, some of you, all of you, and save my property."

The peasant made a pace or two forward, threw back

his head and flourished his hands :—"What, up there, sir?"—and he turned suddenly and vanished.

"A ladder! bring a ladder!" Slotkine cried to the other peasants.

"Where can we get one?" answered one of the group. "And even if we had a ladder," said one in a slow determined voice, "who would dare to go up it? Not such fools. If anybody touches him, he would wring his neck like a chicken."

It was plain to me that even had the danger been less, the peasants would not have obeyed their new master: they evidently admired Kharlof, and were on his side.

"Robbers, scoundrels!" vociferated Slotkine. At this moment the last chimney came crashing down, and through a cloud of yellow dust appeared Kharlof, who gave a cry of triumph, and flourished his bleeding hands, as he turned in our direction. Slotkine again took aim at him, but Evlampia pushed his arm. He turned round. "Do not hinder me!" he cried with fury.

"And you," she said, "don't you dare to do it." Her dark-blue eyes glowed beneath her contracted brows. "My father is pulling down his house: it belongs to him."

"You lie; it belongs to us."

"You say so; and I, his daughter, say that it belongs to him."

Slotkine was choking with rage: Evlampia looked him steadily in the eyes.

"Good day, good day, my dearest daughter," cried Kharlof from the roof: "good day, Evlampia Martinovna. How do you get on with your good friend?"

"Father!" said Evlampia, in a sonorous voice.

"What is it, my daughter?" replied Kharlof, coming to the edge of the wall. I thought I saw on his face a strange smile, serene, almost jovial, and all the more ominous on that account. Many years afterwards I saw such another smile on the face of one condemned to death.

"Have done, father; come down, come to me. We are in fault; we will give you all back: believe your daughter and come down."

"By what right do you make proposals?" interrupted Slotkine. Evlampia did not deign to notice him.

"I will give you back my share," she went on; "I will give you back all. Have done; come down, father: forgive us — forgive me."

Kharlof continued to smile—"Too late, my dove!" he said, and each of his words sounded like ringing brass. "Your heart of stone is moved too late. It is rolling down the mountain now, and it is too late to stop it. Do not look at me: I am a lost man. Look rather at your Volodka. Just see what a fine fellow he looks. Look, too, at your viper of a sister. See there, she is putting her muzzle out of the window; she is calling *st! st!* to her charming husband. No, no, my good folks; you wanted to rob me of my roof; and now I will not leave one beam upon another. Every one of them I hewed and laid with my own hands: with my own hands will I pull them all down. You see, I have not even taken a hatchet." Here he spat in the palms of his hands, and seized a rafter again.

"Have done, father," said Evlampia once more, and her voice became strangely caressing. "Forget the past. Believe me — you always used to believe me. Come down; come into my little room; lie on my bed: I will dry you, warm you, and bind up your wounds. See how your poor hands are torn. With me you will be as sheltered as in a church. You shall have nice dainties, and shall sleep sweetly. Yes, yes, we have been much in fault. Come, forgive us."

Kharlof flung back his head. "Baby-talk! I shall believe you, shall I? You have killed all belief in me — you have killed everything. I was an eagle; I made myself a worm for your sake, and you put your foot on the worm. I loved you; you know it — and how much! Now you are no more my daughter, nor I your father. I am a lost man. And as for you, you coward," addressing himself to Slotkine, "why do you not shoot? Why do you do nothing but level your gun? Aha! you probably remember the law: 'if the donatary attempts the life of

the donor, the latter shall have the right to resume what he has given.' Ho ! ho ! don't be afraid, great lawyer ! I shall ask nothing back : I shall arrange everything myself. Shoot away, then ! "

"Father !" cried Evlampia, in a supplicating voice.

"Hold your tongue."

"Martin Petrovich, my little brother, forgive — be generous," stammered Souvenir.

"Father, my dear father ! "

"Hold your tongue, drab !" — and to Souvenir he only answered with a gesture of contempt.

At this moment Lizinski with his followers mounted upon three *telegas*, appeared at the gate of the inclosure. The exhausted horses were panting, and the men leaped down one after another into the mud.

"Oho !" cried Kharlof at the top of his voice, "an army, a whole army against me. Very well. Only I give fair warning that whoever comes to visit me on my roof, I will throw him down headforemost. I am a punctilious host, and do not like visitors to disturb me." Here he seized with both hands the pair of rafters which formed the front gable, and began wrenching at them with all his force. Planted on the very edge of the flooring, he swayed them to and fro with regular heaves, setting up the sort of chant that the *bourlaki* use when they warp boats up the river : "All together, boys ! Heave ho ! "

Slotkine ran up to Lizinski to make his moan ; but the latter repulsed him abruptly, and prepared to execute the plan he had devised. He took his position in front of the house, and began to reason with Kharlof, telling him that what he was doing was unworthy a gentleman — ("All together, boys ! heave ho !" chanted Kharlof) that Natalia Nicolavna was much offended at his conduct, and that it was not what she had looked for from him. "All together, boys ! heave ho !" chanted Kharlof on the roof.

But Lizinski had sent around four of the strongest and boldest grooms to the other side of the house to climb up on the roof. This stratagem did not escape Kharlof's vigilance, and he left the gable and ran across the garret.

His aspect was so formidable that two of the men who had climbed up, precipitately slid down again by the rain-spout, to the great joy and amid the peals of laughter of the boys assembled in the yard. Kharlof shook his fist at the fugitives, and returning to his gable, began to shake it again, resuming his chant. Suddenly he stopped.—“Maximouchka, friend of my heart,” he cried, “is that you I see?”

I turned round. The little Cossack Maximka was standing in front of a group of peasants, and now came forward, grinning from ear to ear. His master the saddler had probably given him a holiday.

“Come here, Maximouchka, my faithful servant! Come, we will defend ourselves together against the villainous Tatars and the Polish bandits.” Maximka, still grinning, was about to climb up; but they seized him and dragged him back, heaven knows why, for he could have been of but little assistance to Kharlof. “Ah, that’s your way, is it?” he cried, attacking the rafters again.

“Vikenti Ossipitch,” said Slotkine to Lizinski, “let me fire at him only to frighten him. My gun is only loaded with snipe-shot.”

Lizinski had not the time to answer him: the beams of the gable, furiously shaken by the iron hands of Kharlof, cracked, toppled over, and finally fell crashing into the yard, carrying with them Kharlof himself, who had lost his balance and fell with all his weight upon the ground. A cry of horror burst from all. Kharlof lay stretched out with his face downwards. The heavy ridge-pole of the roof had come down with the gable, and had fallen across his shoulders.

They ran up, lifted off the beam, and turned him over on his back. His face was lifeless; he had ceased to breathe, and blood was oozing from the corners of his mouth. “It is all over,” murmured the peasants who had gathered round. They ran to the well for water, and dashed a bucket-full over his head. The mud and dust were washed off, but there was no movement perceptible. A bench was brought and placed against the house.

With great labor they lifted him to a sitting position upon it, leaning his head against the wall. The little Cossack Maximka approached, kneeled on one knee, and lifted in his two hands the left hand of his old master. Pale as death, Evlampia came and stood before her father, gazing at him with wide-open fixed eyes. Neither Anna nor Slotkine dared to approach, but remained silent in a sort of gloomy terror. Presently a kind of bubbling noise was heard in the throat of Kharlof, as of a man who strangles in drinking; then he made a feeble movement with his right arm, opened one eye, his right, and having cast a stupefied look around, as if he were intoxicated, he stammered,—“Shat—tered!” Then, after a pause—“there it is, the black colt!” A flood of thick blood gushed from his mouth, and a shiver passed through his whole frame.

“This is the end,” I thought; but Kharlof again opened his right eye, the left all the time remaining closed, like that of a corpse, cast a look at Evlampia, and in an almost inaudible voice said, “It is you, daughter; I”—Lizinski beckoned the priest who was still on the steps. The old man hastened, but his trembling limbs were entangled in his long surplice. Suddenly a frightful convulsion shook the whole frame of Kharlof, and extended upwards to his face. The face of Evlampia was distorted at the same moment as if she shared her father’s agony. Maximka crossed himself. I was frightened, and running to the gate, hid my face against one of the posts. At this moment a low murmur ran from mouth to mouth, and I understood that Kharlof had ceased to live. The heavy beam had broken his spine.

What was it he wanted to say in his last moments? I asked myself, as I rode home: “I curse you,” or “I forgive you”? Although the rain was falling again, I rode at a walk, wrapped up in my own thoughts. Souvenir had gone on one of the *telegas* which Lizinski had brought. Young and light-hearted as I was, I could not help being struck by the sudden and profound effect produced in all these hearts by the unexpected—or even expected—ap-

pearance of death ; by its solemnity, and what I may call its sincerity. I had been deeply moved, and yet my boyish glance had noted many things : how Slotkine quickly and stealthily threw away his gun as if it had been a stolen thing ; how his wife and he suddenly became the objects of general silent reprobation, and how all drew away from them, leaving them standing alone.

This reprobation did not extend to Evlampia, though she was not less culpable than her sister ; indeed she had even excited a certain pity when she fell, an inert mass, at the feet of her dead father. Still, all felt that she was a guilty creature. "Injustice to the old man," said a gray-headed peasant, leaning, like an antique judge, with both hands and with his chin, from which flowed a long gray beard, resting on his long staff. "The sin is on your souls." Injustice ! This word was at once accepted by all as a sentence from which there was no appeal. It was the voice of their conscience. I felt it also, as I stood holding in my hand my cap, which I had instinctively taken off in the presence of death. I also noticed that at first Slotkine did not venture to give any orders. Without any reference to him, they took up the body and carried it to the house. Without addressing a word to him, the priest went to the church for things that he needed, and the *starosta* sent off a *telega* to the town to notify the authorities. As for Anna, when she ordered a *samovar* to be heated to wash the body, it was not with her habitual tone of authority, but almost in an entreaty, and she was answered roughly.

But I kept asking myself : What was it he wanted to say to his daughter ? Was it a curse, or was it forgiveness ? I concluded at last that he had forgiven her ; and felt relief at the thought.

Three days later Kharlof's funeral took place, the cost being defrayed by my mother, who, greatly afflicted at his death, ordered that no expense should be spared. She herself did not go to the church, not wishing, she said, to see the three guilty ones ; but she sent me with Lizinski and Gitkof, whom from that time she treated like an old

woman. Souvenir was formally forbidden to appear in her sight ; and for a long time afterwards she treated him with sternness, calling him the assassin of her friend. He felt this treatment acutely, and used to walk up and down for hours, on tip-toe, in the chamber next to my mother's. He seemed a prey to a sort of ignoble melancholy ; and shivered almost incessantly, muttering, "pardon, pardon ! "

During the ceremonies at church, Slotkine seemed to have recovered himself ; he behaved as usual, and took watchful care that there should be no unnecessary expenditure, even though it did not come out of his pocket. Maximka, clad in a new jacket, a present from my mother, had slipped in among the singers, with whom he intoned the hymns in a tenor of such piercing shrillness that none could doubt the sincerity of his attachment to the deceased. The two sisters were there, dressed in mourning, and wearing an air rather of uneasiness than affliction, especially Evlampia. Anna had assumed a humble contrite expression ; but she had no appearance of weeping, but continually passed her long thin hand over her hair. At intervals Evlampia seemed to sink into a gloomy reverie.

The general look of fixed reprobation that I had remarked at the time of Kharlof's death, was still visible on all faces, in all movements and glances ; but it had become, not less strong, but colder, and, as it were, more indifferent. One might have said that these people all knew that the great sin of this family had now been laid before the only true Judge, and that they had no need further to disturb themselves about it. All prayed with fervor for the soul of the deceased, of the man whom they had loved but little and feared much during his life — but his death had been so sudden and unforeseen !

"If he had only been fond of drink," said one peasant to another on the steps of the church.

"It is possible to be drunk without drinking," was the reply.

"Yes, injustice has been done," said the first.

"Injustice," all around him repeated.

"Yet he was a hard master to you," I remarked to a man whom I recognised as one of Kharlof's serfs.

"That does not alter the injustice that has been done him," he answered.

At the grave Evlampia showed the same absence of mind: she seemed plunged in gloomy abstraction. I remarked that she treated Slotkine, who tried once or twice to speak to her, as she had treated Gitkof, and even worse.

Some days afterwards the rumor ran that Evlampia Martinovna had quitted her home forever, and without saying whither she was going. She had resigned to her sister all her portion of the estate, only taking with her a few hundred rubles.

"The good Anna," said my mother, when she heard this news, "she has got her husband back now."

Then addressing herself to Gitkof, who had taken Souvenir's place at her piquet-table,—"It is only you who have such awkward hands that they can neither take nor hold."

Gitkof heaved a sigh, looking at his large hands spread out on the table.

Not long afterwards, my mother and I went to reside at Moscow, and many years passed ere I again saw any of the family of Kharlof.

V.

When I again met Anna Martinovna, it was in the most natural way in the world. After my mother's death, I took a journey to our village, where I had not been for fifteen years, and while there was invited by the justice of the peace to meet several other proprietors in consultation at the house of the widow Anna Slotkine. This was at the time when the division of the common seigniorial lands was going on with a tardiness which is not yet forgotten. The news of the death of the little black-eyed Jew caused me no regret, I confess; and I was not sorry to have a chance of seeing his widow. She enjoyed, in all

our district, the reputation of being an admirable manager. Indeed her domain, her farms, her house (I looked in voluntarily at the roof, which was now covered with sheet-iron) all exhibited the most perfect order. All was arranged, swept clean, painted fresh: one might have supposed that the mistress was a German.

Anna herself had certainly grown older; but that peculiar charm of hers, that dry mischievous way which had so taken my fancy once, had not altogether left her. Her toilette was rustic, but in good taste. She received us with courtesy, and when she greeted me, who had been a witness of that dreadful catastrophe, she never moved an eyelid. She made not the slightest allusion to her mother, her father, her sister, or her husband. She had two daughters, both pretty, light graceful figures with amiable faces, and an expression at once gay and caressing in their black eyes; and a son who resembled his father too strongly, but was really a very handsome boy.

During the discussion between the proprietors, Anna's bearing was calm and full of dignity. Showing neither excessive obstinacy nor excessive avidity, there was no one better understood their interest, or who knew how to explain and defend their rights in a more convincing manner. All the laws bearing upon the business, and even the ministerial circulars, she had studied and mastered. She spoke but little, and in a soft voice; but every word was to the point. The final result of this conference was that we all gave in to her wishes, and made concessions at which we were afterwards astonished. On returning, two gentlemen publicly declared that they considered themselves fools. All were growling and dissatisfied.

"Is she not a clever one, that woman?" asked one.

"She is a cunning hussy, that is what she is," said another, less delicate in his expressions. "As the old saying has it, she makes you a very soft bed, but it is hard sleeping in it."

"And how niggardly," said another. "A spoonful of caviar, and a little glass of brandy to each: that is what she calls hospitality!"

"What could you expect from that woman?" said one who had not spoken. "Who does not know that she poisoned her husband?"

To my astonishment, no one protested against this horrible accusation. I was still more confounded in seeing that all, whatever their thoughts, treated Anna with the deepest respect. The justice of the peace became quite poetical when he spoke of her. "She is a Semiramis," he cried, "or a Catherine the Great. A model for the obedience of her peasants; a model for the education of her children. What a head, what a brain!"

Semiramis or Catherine aside, there was no doubt that the widow Slotkine was leading a most enviable life. Her family, her surroundings, herself, all wore an air of contentment, the happy serenity of perfect physical and moral health. As to how far she had deserved this happiness, that is another question; and besides we only ask these questions when we are young. Everything in the world, good as well as bad, is bestowed upon man less in accordance with his deserts than by virtue of inflexible laws, not yet understood, but logical.

I asked the justice about Evlampia. After her disappearance she had not been heard from, and was believed to be dead. And yet I am convinced that I once met her. The circumstances were these:

About four years later than my last interview with Anna, I had gone to spend the summer at Mourino, a little village near St. Petersburg. At this time there was good shooting near the village, and I went out with my gun almost every day. I had for a companion a man of St. Petersburg named Vikoulof, a very good fellow, and sensible enough, but who had led, as he said, "a pretty wild life." Where had he not been, and what had he not been? Nothing could ever surprise him; and he only cared for two things: shooting and brandy.

One day, on our way back to Mourino, we happened to pass by an isolated building situated near a cross-roads, and surrounded by a close and lofty paling. This was not the first time that I had noticed this house: it had

something mysterious, rusty, dumb about it, which suggested ideas of a prison or a hospital. From the road one could only see the high peaked roof, painted of a dark color. There was but one gate to the paling, and that seemed to be barricaded. No noise was ever heard there ; and yet the house was not deserted : it was plain that there were inhabitants in it. As for the rest, it might have resisted a siege, it was so massively built.

"What sort of a fortress is that?" I asked my companion.

Vikoulof winked with a meaning look. "A queer house indeed ! It pays a good revenue to the *ispravnik* of the district."

"How so?"

"Have you ever heard talk of the sect of *raskolnik* [old believers] and of those of them called *khlisti*, who live without priests?"

"Certainly."

"Well, it is here that their principal head, their *Mother* lives."

"A woman?"

"Yes ; a mother. They call her a holy virgin. They say that she is very severe ; a real general. She handles thousands and thousands of rubles. Ah, if it was in my power, I would hang all their 'holy virgins' ; but what can you do?"

Vikoulof's words remained in my memory. Often afterwards I went out of my way expressly to pass the mysterious house. One day as I was passing its solitary gate, to my amazement I heard the wooden bolt drawn, the key creaked in the lock, and the gate slowly opened. A splendid horse, his head adorned with a bright-colored *douga*, appeared, and a light *telega*, like those used by wealthy merchants, emerged from the court and turned into the road. On the cushion nearest me sat a man about thirty years old, of a remarkably handsome and regular face. He was dressed in a neat black caftan, and wore a black cap which covered his face down to the eyes ; and with a certain dignity he handled the reins and managed his powerful horse. By his side was seated a woman of tall stature, erect as a

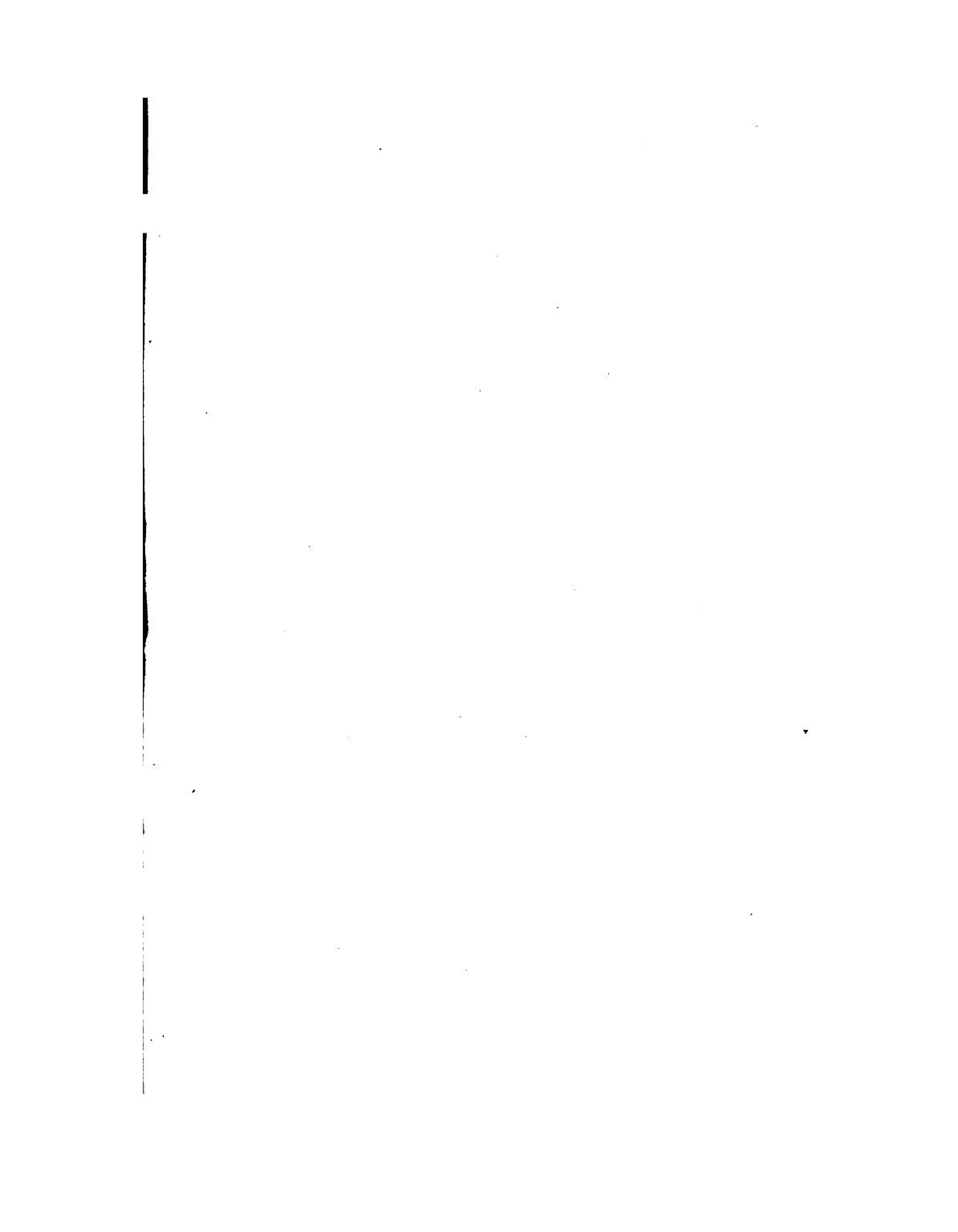
fance, dressed in a short pelisse of olive velvet, and a skirt of some blue woollen stuff. A rich black shawl covered her head. Her two white hands were gravely crossed on her breast. The *telega* turned suddenly, so that the woman was brought quite close to me. She made a movement, and I recognised Evlampia. Kharlof's daughter.

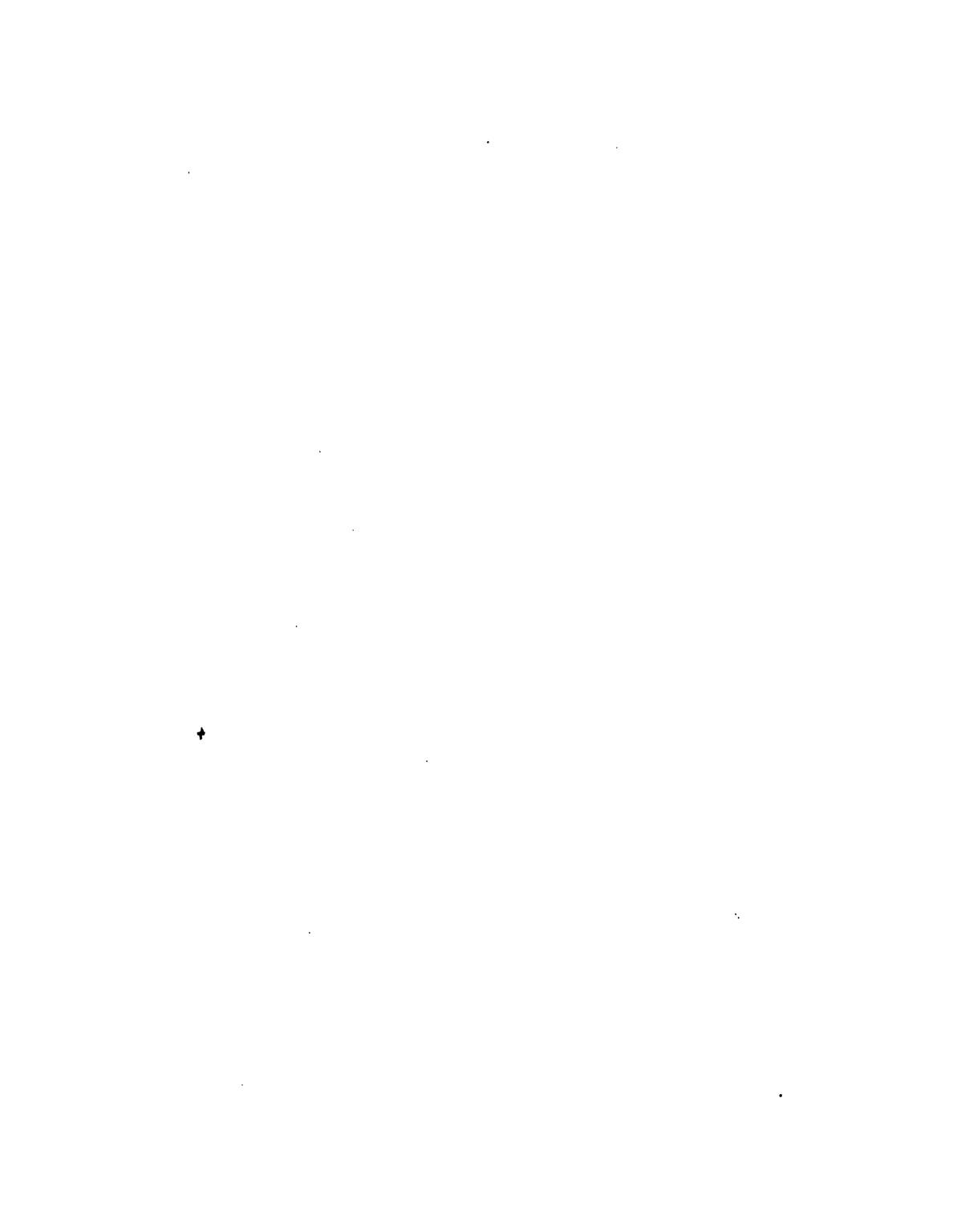
I recognised her in an instant, without a shadow of doubt; for I have never seen eyes like hers, nor such lips, at once so haughty and so sensual. Her face had grown longer, her skin had lost some of its freshness and showed a few wrinkles, but it was her expression that had changed the most. It would be hard to describe its cast of severe and proud assurance. It was not merely the calm enjoyment of power which breathed from all her features, but the satiety of it. In the careless glance which she let fall upon me, might be read the habit of meeting everywhere nothing but submission without reply. Evidently this woman lived surrounded not by sectaries but by slaves: evidently she no longer remembered the time when her lightest wish was not equivalent to a command. I pronounced her name aloud: she started with a slight shiver, and looked at me again, not with fear but with a disdainful indignation as if she had said: "Who is it dares to accost me?"

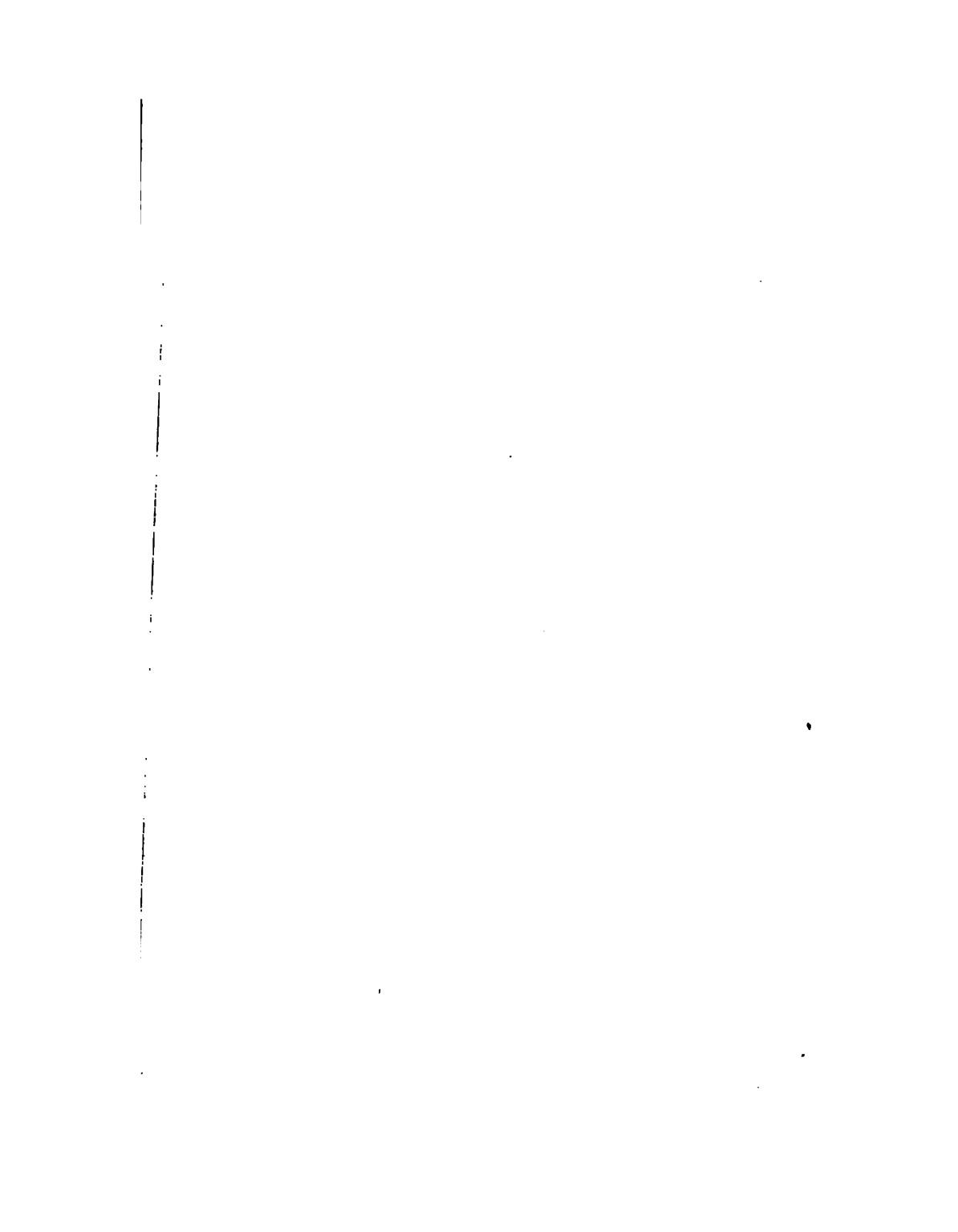
She pronounced a single word, almost without opening her lips; the man at her side struck the horse with the reins, he went off in a trot, and the *telega* disappeared. From that day I have never again seen Evlampia: I can not even imagine how the daughter of Kharlof became a holy virgin among the *Khlisti*. Who knows?—perhaps she has by this time founded a new sect called the sect of Evlampia: such things have been known in Russia.

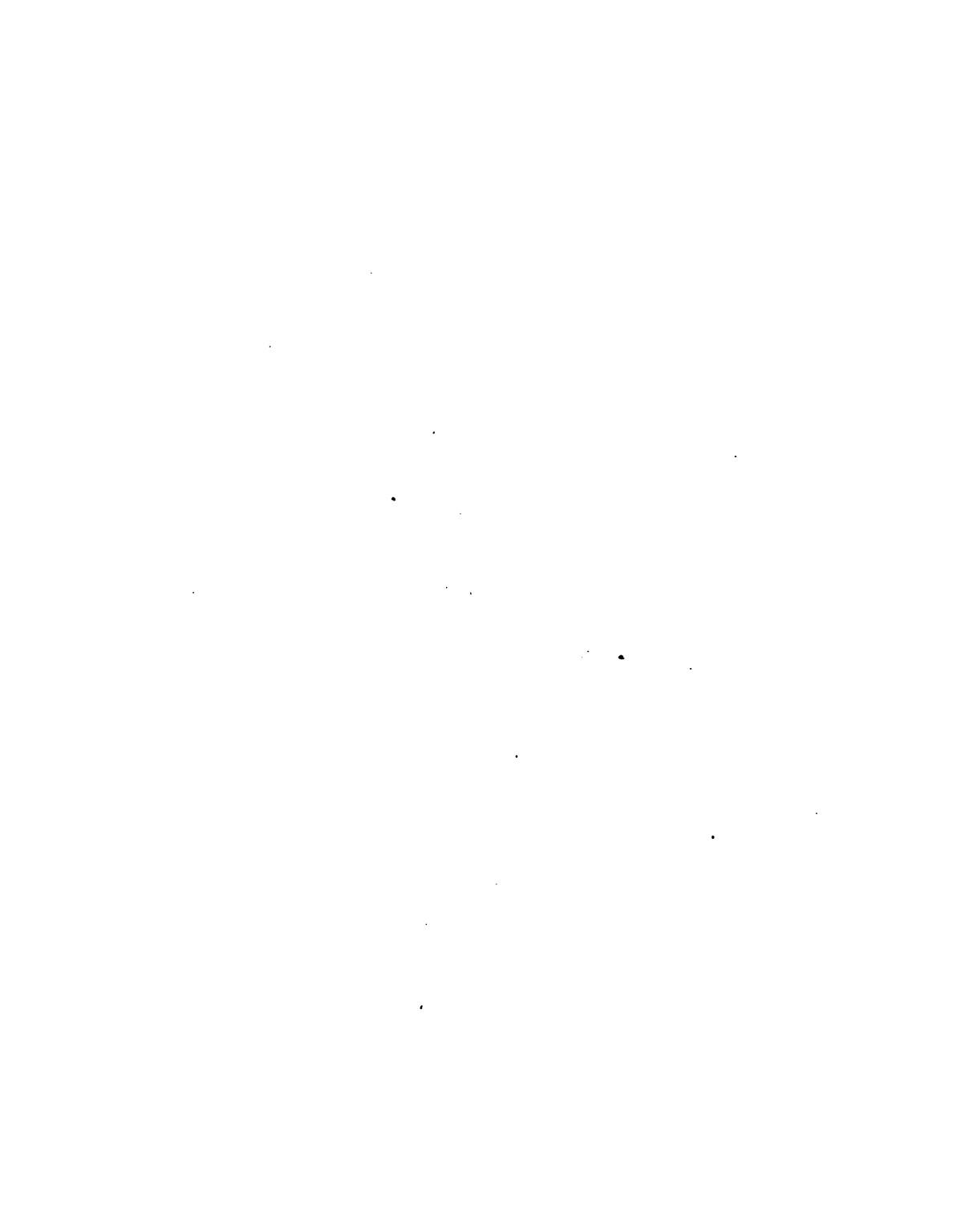
This is what I had to tell you of my Lear of the Steppe, of his life and of his family.

The narrator ceased, and we took leave of each other.









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